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THE PHOENICIAN SOLAR THEOLOGY

An Investigation into the Phoenician Opinion of the Sun Found in Julian's *Hymn to King Helios*

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DEDICATION

la khayi Ḥunna al-marḥoum

ya khayi, ya nufsi—
khahak ma biyinsa, ḥabibi,
abadan, abadan, abadan.

CONTENTS

ABBREVIATIONS

ABD	*Anchor Bible Dictionary*, Doubleday, New York
ACFP	Atti della congressi di studi fenici e punici
ANES	Ancient Near Eastern Studies
ANF	Ante-Nicene Fathers
ANRW	*Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt*, ed. Wolfgang Haase, Walter de Gruyter Berlin
An St	Anatolian Studies
AOF	Altorientalische Forschungen
BASOR	Bulletin of the American School of Oriental Research
CAD	*The Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago*, Ignace J. Gelb [et al.], The Oriental Institute, Chicago, 1952
CANE	*Civilizations of the Ancient Near East*, Jack M. Sasson (ed. in chief), John Baines; Gary Beckman and Karen S. Rubinson (associate eds), Charles Scribner's Sons, New York (in four volumes), 1995
CAT	*The Cuneiform Alphabetic Texts from Ugarit, Ras Ibn Hani and other Places,* M. Dietrich, O. Loretz and J. Sanmartin, Ugarit-Verlag, Munster, 1995 (2nd edition)
DCPP	Dictionnaire de la civilisation phénicienne et punique, ed. E. Lipinski, Brepols, Turnhout, 1992
DDD	*Dictionary of Demons and Deities in the Bible,* ed. Karel van der Toorn, Bob Becking, and Pieter van der Horst, E. J. Brill Leiden, (extensively revised edition), 1998
DNWSI	*Dictionary of North-West Semitic Inscriptions,* J. Hoftijzer and K. Jongeling, E. J. Brill Leiden, 1995 (in two volumes)
EI	Erets-Israel
HTR	Harvard Theological Review
IDB	Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, Abingdon, Nashville
IEJ	Israel Exploration Journal

JAOS	Journal of the American Oriental Society
JANER	Journal of Ancient Near Eastern Religions
JANES	Journal of the Ancient Near Eastern Society
JBL	Journal of Biblical Literature
JEA	Journal of Egyptian Archaeology
JHS	Journal of Hellenic Studies
JNES	Journal of Near Eastern Studies
JRAS	Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society
JRS	Journal of Roman Studies
KAI	*Kanaanäische und Aramäische Inschriften*, H. Donner and W. Röllig, Otto Harrassowitz, Wiesbaden, 1971-1976, in three volumes
LSJ	Liddell, Scott, and Jones, *Greek-English Lexicon*
MUSJ	Mélanges de l'Université Saint Joseph
NPEA	Der Neue Pauly Enzyklopädie der Antike
OA	Oriens Antiquus
OCD	Oxford Classical Dicionary, (3rd edition)
OLA	Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta
OLP	Orientalia Lovaniensia Periodica
Or. N.S.	Orientalia, New Series
RSF	Rivista di Studi Fenici
SEL	Studia Epigrafici e Linguistici sul Vicino Oriente
St Ph	Studia Phoenicia
SVF	*Stoicorum Veterum Fragmentum*, ed. H. von Arnim, Teubner, 1903-1905
UF	Ugarit-Forschungen
VT	Vetus Testamentum
ZA	Zeitschrift für Assyriologie

FIGURES

SUMMARY

The Emperor Julian, in his *Hymn to King Helios*, states:

> For the opinion of the Phoenicians—(who are) wise and possessed of knowledge in respect of divine matters—stated that the sunlight (which is) sent forth everywhere is the immaculate action of pure mind itself.

I refer to this passage as the "Solar Pericope". This thesis demonstrates that Julian's statement is reliable evidence for one aspect of ancient Phoenician thought. It is shown that this concept is similar to a formulation found in Damaskios' short quotation from Mochos, the Sidonian philosopher, who probably lived in the sixth or fifth century BCE.

The Solar Pericope is placed in the context of Julian's other references to the Phoenicians and within the *Hymn to King Helios*. Julian saw this Phoenician concept as an independent confirmation of his ideas.

The Phoenician solar religion is examined in some detail, against the background of ancient Phoenician culture and religious and spiritual life. Seven concepts are abstracted from the evidence (particularly from the Phoenician funerary inscriptions), as forming the framework of a solar theology.

Relevant artistic evidence is gathered. All ancient writers who can shed light upon the solar theology as reconstructed are cited and considered. Analogs are also considered from Mesopotamia, Egypt, and Ugarit.

The surviving Greek language evidence of Mochos, Philo of Byblos, and the Sidonian cosmogony preserved in Damaskios' quotation from Eudemos are especially important. Pausanias and Lydus are also considered.

A passage from Philo, preserved in Lydus, states that in the Phoenician language, "Iao" (= Yahweh) meant "the noetic light". This idea is reliable and is consistent with the Solar Pericope. Philo's reference in the first century CE to "noetic light" strengthens the argument that Julian's Solar Pericope contains authentic ancient Phoenician material, not dependent upon Neoplatonism.

INTRODUCTION

Chapter one sets out the starting point, the extract from the Emperor Julian's *Hymn to King Helios* which I call the "Solar Pericope". In translation it reads:

> For the opinion of the Phoenicians—(who are) wise and possessed of knowledge in respect of divine matters—stated that the sunlight (which is) sent forth everywhere is the immaculate action of pure mind itself.

The questions for the entire thesis are posed here: was Julian a trustworthy witness to an aspect of ancient Phoenician thought? Did any Phoenicians ever maintain this doctrine? If so, what did they mean and when did they maintain it? How does this study affect our overall view of Phoenician religion and intellectual thought?

In order to consider such a doctrine fully, and to explore its ramifications, it proves desirable to engage with the ideas the Phoenicians formed about the sun. Thus, commencing from one suggestive statement, the thesis in effect reconstructs some of the skeleton of what might be called the "Phoenician solar theology".

It is noted that there has been a certain tendency in scholarship to see Phoenician culture as a chapter in the history of the Greek Mediterranean. That is changing, but it is still an influential tendency, and the attitude must be recognized and addressed impartially.

To understand the Solar Pericope, the other occasions on which Julian referred to the Phoenicians are set out. These are the "Aphrodite Pericope", the "Semele Pericope", the "Edessa Pericope", and the "Arithmetic Pericope". The "Aphrodite Pericope" and "Edessa Pericope" are also found in the *Hymn to King Helios* and are related by Julian to Phoenician ideas on the sun.

Chapter two deals with the Solar Pericope in detail. It commences by outlining Julian's background, and then deals with the genre of the *Hymn to King Helios*, concluding that it is chiefly a philosophical discourse. It then analyses the Solar Pericope and its place within the *Hymn to King Helios*. In the *Hymn*, Julian presented a scheme of the universe comprised of three cosmoses. The center

of each cosmos is the deity Helios. All of these worlds are linked directly through their center, and that center is the sun of each world. Julian also stated that his discourse did not "sing out of tune with this" (i.e., the Solar Pericope), showing that Julian considered the Phoenician ideas to be exterior to his philosophy. That is, Julian saw the Solar Pericope as an independent confirmation of his ideas.

Chapter three analyses and contextualises the remaining "Phoenician Pericopes". It is demonstrated that these show that Julian's "Phoenicians" were the people whom we call by the same name, the inhabitants of the Lebanese coast. Further, Julian saw the Phoenicians as having had a lengthy history, and as having developed an advanced civilization before the Greeks did, although, in the Arithmetic Pericope he makes it clear that the Greeks perfected what he considered to be the originally Phoenician science of arithmetic.

Chapter four considers Julian and his sources. In particular, it sets the stage to investigate the influence of Iamblichos on Julian. It is necessary to examine Julian's sources, because he did take some of his "Phoenician theology" from Iamblichos, and Iamblichos did publish at least one work under another name. The possibility that the "Phoenician theology" was a Neoplatonic anachronism must therefore be considered. This chapter considers Julian's use of Plato, Aristotle, Pythagoras, and other writers or philosophers in the Greek and Latin traditions (e.g., Homer and Empedokles). It also mentions some concepts found in Menander the Rhetor and Ammianus Marcellinus, as these illustrate certain features found in the *Hymn to King Helios.* The chapter also deals with the influence on Julian of Mithraism, and certain Neoplatonists, especially Maximos.

Chapter five studies the relationship between Julian and Iamblichos. It investigates Iamblichos' philosophy, and the evidence for Iamblichos' attitude to the Phoenicians. It examines whether any original Phoenician religious or spiritual ideas could have survived into the third and fourth centuries CE, and if so, how credible it is that Iamblichos and Porphyry would have had access to authentically Semitic material. Porphyry is mentioned not only because he was an elder contemporary of Iamblichos, but because of a specific controversy as to whether he knew any Semitic language at all. I also consider Julian's own contributions to

the philosophical ideas found in his mature works such as the *Hymn to King Helios*.

Chapter six studies the Phoenicians. It considers the way that "Phoenicia" has effectively been seen as a division within the Greek Mediterranean, and concludes that although Phoenicia is often studied this way, it need not be. To provide context to the Phoenician Pericope, it discusses Preus' view that philosophy was actually a product of the Western Mediterranean as a whole, and not simply Greece. The theories of Phoenician influence on ancient Greece and Etruria are mentioned. There is some discussion of the connections between Greece and the East in philosophy.

Chapter seven examines Ugarit and its sun goddess, Šapšu, examining the extent to which Ugaritian ideas on the sun were consistent with Phoenician ones. It considers Šapšu as mediator and as psychopompe, but chiefly, as the sun itself.

Chapter eight commences the dedicated examination of the Phoenician solar religion. First, it considers the name of the sun deity (Šamaš), and then makes a study of certain funerary inscriptions (particularly those of Ahiram, Tabnit, and Ešmunazor II). It abstracts from these a group of seven related ideas. These ideas are set out both at the end of this chapter, and again in the Conclusion.

Chapter nine considers miscellaneous evidence for the Phoenician solar religion: chiefly certain inscriptions, works of art (especially the Sign of Tanit, which is shown to be a flexible symbol to which solar connotations could be attached), the institution of the *mrzḥ* (*mzrḥ*), temples and betyls, the onomastic evidence, Aštart and deities associated with Venus, the Phoenix bird, and astronomical interpretations of certain Phoenician bowls. Finally, it shows the plausibility of this reconstructed solar theology by reference to certain ideas about the sun current in Mesopotamia and Egypt.

Chapter ten deals with the surviving Greek language evidence of Phoenician writers: Mochos, Philo, and the Sidonian cosmogony preserved in Damaskios' quotation from Eudemos. It is seen that the evidence here, especially the figure of Oulomos mentioned by Mochos (and Oton or Otos, perhaps the equivalent of Oulomos in the Sidonian cosmogony), substantiates details of the reconstructed Phoenician solar theology. This is, in some ways, the most direct evidence that before any possible influence from Neoplatonism,

the ancient Phoenicians held the idea expressed in the Solar Pericope. It is seen that there are many issues in the study of Philo of Byblos. However, his reference to the sun and Mot in one of his cosmogonies is reliable, and does not stand in need of textual amendment.

Chapter eleven considers other late evidence, namely, Pausanias and Lydus. Pausanias describes a conversation with a Sidonian about the sun and its natural effects. This conversation is self-conscious in its use of religious metaphors, that is, it is explicitly recognized that in speaking of *deities* one is speaking of the *natural forces* represented by them.

It appears that Iao (Yahweh) could have had a role as a Phoenician deity. This would explain certain anomalous pieces of evidence, and would make sense of an enigmatic statement of Philo of Byblos, preserved only in a very short fragment of Lydus:

> The Roman Varro … says that amongst the Chaldeans in the mysteries he is called "Iao" (in place of) the noetic light in the Phoenician tongue, which Herennios (also) says.

Short as it is, this fragment is important, for it shows that Philo (writing two hundred and fifty years or more before Julian) preserved an idea which is consistent with the "philosophical" notions preserved in Julian. The very reference to "noetic light" goes to indicate that the Phoenicians must have developed some notions similar to those later encountered in the *Chaldaean Oracles* and in Neoplatonism. It is shown in this chapter that the reference to "Iao" or "Yahweh" is not fanciful: there is reason to think that Yahweh was recognized as a deity in Phoenicia.

CHAPTER 1
THE QUESTION AND THE METHOD

> ἡ μὲν οὖν τῶν Φοινίκων δόξα, σοφῶν τὰ θεῖα καὶ ἐπιστημόνων, ἄχραντον εἶναι ἐνέργειαν αὐτοῦ τοῦ καθαροῦ νοῦ τὴν ἁπανταχῇ προϊοῦσαν αὐγὴν ἔφη·…
>
> For the opinion of the Phoenicians—(who are) wise and possessed of knowledge in respect of divine matters—stated that the sunlight (which is) sent forth everywhere is the immaculate action of pure mind itself.[1]

So wrote Julian the Emperor in his *Hymn to King Helios*.[2] This thesis is, I believe, the first historical investigation into the reliability of this passage, which I call the "Solar Pericope". Such an enquiry is now overdue, for Julian records, here and in the related Aphrodite and Edessa Pericopes, a series of ideas which I have never seen seriously considered in any study of Phoenician religion. Yet, the authenticity of the Solar Pericope is an interesting and important issue. The idea that the sun is related to mind might not seem at all novel: after all, the light of the sun reveals what has been in darkness. That is, both mind and the sun shed light, they clarify. But the Solar Pericope is set within the context of ideas which develop this observation beyond the scope of a commonplace. If Julian is a trustworthy witness to an aspect of ancient Phoenician thought, and if one can make sense of this single remark in its context, then our sketchy picture of Phoenician religion and spirituality, based largely on Philo of Byblos and a small number of inscriptions, acquires shades of interest which had been absent.

The ramifications of this short passage are not unimportant. For example, this statement cannot readily be categorized as either mythological or philosophical. It is not simply a statement of

---

[1] Compare W. C. Wright's translation: "Now the doctrine of the Phoenicians, who were wise and learned in sacred lore, declared that the rays of light everywhere diffused are the undefiled incarnation of pure mind". Wright (1913) p. 363. I have considered the translation of "doctrine", but opted for "opinion" as being equally true to the Greek, but less suggestive of a rigid corpus of formulations.

[2] *Hymn to King Helios* 134A.

mythology, because it includes an explicitly abstract statement about the nature of mind in the world. Yet, neither is it analytic philosophy, for—as we shall see—Julian purports to relate it to opinions which deify the sun and speak of the goddess "Aphrodite" (almost certainly Aštart) as the sun's assistant in his work. In trying to come to grips with this, we must remember that very often in modern discourse the term "philosophy" is taken to mean "analytic philosophy". Perhaps a better, although not entirely satisfactory, term for this Phoenician body of ideas would be "spiritual philosophy" or (with some qualification) the word Julian used—"theology". In some ways, the term "spirituality" is even better than "theology" because it does not suggest a formulated body of doctrines, but rather a cast of mind. These questions will be resumed in later chapters. Although by no means central to my thesis, these issues of definition are legitimate.

Another important implication of this study relates to the celebrated Iamblichos, a Neoplatonic philosopher who is undergoing something of a reassessment in scholarly circles. As shall be seen below, there is reason to believe that Julian's source for the Solar, the Aphrodite, and the Edessa Pericopes was Iamblichos. Only a few of Iamblichos' works have survived, and none of these refers to any Phoenician ideas similar to this one. So this study has the potential also to expand our knowledge of Iamblichos. If developed, it also might broaden our understanding of the sun cult of the Roman Empire.

However, the focus of this thesis is neither Iamblichos nor religion in the Roman Empire generally: it is the Phoenicians. The questions posed here include the following: did any Phoenicians ever in fact, at any time, hold the belief that sunlight comprises the immaculate action of pure mind? If so, what was meant by that, and when did they conceive that idea? Is it possible that the Phoenicians formulated a related idea, but that when Julian or his source came to restate that concept, they rephrased it using the vocabulary of Neoplatonism? What does Julian mean to say that the Phoenicians "believed"? How widely is the belief attested? How does this study affect our overall view of Phoenician religion and intellectual thought?

This short chapter aims only to set the parameters of my enquiry. Time and again, I shall return to the importance of establishing the context of our data and our categories. This is not

a trite statement: Phoenician studies are in a state of flux, and I shall contend that even our understanding of who the Phoenicians were depends upon the framework we accept for this issue.

In brief, I shall maintain that, to a certain extent and in particular quarters, there has been a more or less unconscious tendency to see Phoenician culture only, if not merely, as a chapter in the history of the Greek Mediterranean. That is, Greek texts, Greek artifacts, and Greek history—in a word, Greek civilization—are taken as the axis around which all ancient Mediterranean civilization turns. This is not to say that the importance of these other civilizations is ever denied. However, especially in the past, their contribution to science and the arts has been tacitly and implicitly devalued. Recent years have brought a definite change in this regard.

Yet the situation still obtains that foreign documents, artifacts, and history are interpreted in the light of the Greek ones. Greek society and history are treated as cardinal, and statements by Phoenicians are not accepted where they contradict those of Greek writers. As we shall see, scholars have refused to accept the plain sense of a statement made by Porphyry *à propos* of his name, basically because it does not correspond to the picture we have from the other Greek language sources. In this respect, it is important that it is rarely acknowledged that while the Phoenicians did come to use Greek, they did so because it was the tongue of their conquerors. If Julian's statement about Phoenician opinions is authentic—and I contend that it probably is—then it could mean that the Phoenician contribution to the religion and philosophy of the Mediterranean was camouflaged not only by the Greek language, but by the ascendant Greek culture in general.

We shall see that it is not infrequently asserted that ideas which circulated amongst these non-Greek peoples must have commenced with the Greeks because they are first attested amongst the Greeks. Any scholarly misgivings about this—however well-reasoned—are dismissed as lacking evidence. This approach is so completely dominant that even the possibility of a non-Greek origin or contribution is rejected when scholars might at least have entertained it as a possibility. It is becoming more apparent that fresh perspectives are available upon the Mediterranean and its civilizations—perspectives based upon a

consideration of all of the evidence including the results of archaeology and not only upon the Greek texts.

To an extent, this Hellenocentric view of the Mediterranean prevails because we have a much better knowledge of Greek history than we do of the history of the Phoenician, Jewish, and other peoples of that world. Yet this does not justify a failure to make an attempt to look at these cultures without Hellenic spectacles, especially when it is known that the Greeks (on the whole) felt superior to these peoples, and literally coined the word "barbarian" to refer to them.

At the very outset, it is apparent that the task of discerning the extent to which Julian's "Phoenician theology" is in fact authentically Phoenician will not be an easy one. First of all, Julian is writing in Greek. He read no Phoenician; and indeed, apart from Greek seems only to have known Latin; and even then he may not have been fully bilingual.[3] Paradoxically, this supports my contention that the Solar Pericope is authentically Phoenician, for Julian was a Hellenist, and had no reason to cite "Phoenicians" when he could have drawn upon his own beloved Greeks. This line of thought shall be developed below. On the other hand, because we are reading this in Julian, and not even in the text of a Phoenician who can write in Greek (such as Philo of Byblos), it does mean that our information is coming to us indirectly: the direct connection with Phoenicia is no longer extant, if indeed there ever had been such a connection.

Secondly, Julian is manifestly writing within a Hellenist world-outlook, and is thus viewing the Phoenicians through a colored lens. This has the effect that Julian cites the "Phoenician theology" in such a way that he gives the impression that the Phoenician concepts and his own Neoplatonic ideas on King Helios entirely coincide. In fact, this is an illusion. If Julian is read closely it can be seen that he cites the Phoenicians only at certain points, and even then, those points are less crucial than the far greater number where he is quoting Greek writers. The Solar Pericope does not contradict Julian's Neoplatonic synthesis, but neither is it necessary for it. It appears simply to be a Phoenician novelty which struck Julian as offering support for certain of his arguments. For all that, it may be significant that it was a Phoenician novelty to which

[3] Bouffartigue (1992) pp. 408 and 500.

Julian turned. Bouffartigue is of the view that a development in Julian's attitude to the Greeks, Romans, and "barbarians" can be discerned. Commencing from the observation that, in his later writing, Julian seems to have been departing from Greek astronomy in favor of the Phoenician version, Bouffartigue notes that Ammianus attributes to Julian a tendency to adopt Asiatic manners.[4] It is in fact difficult to make much out of this passage of Ammianus,[5] except that Julian must be emperor at the time he is rebuked by Eutherius for his affectations. We are not told that these indulgences were becoming more frequent or in what they consisted. However, I think Bouffartigue must be presuming that Julian could not have maintained Asiatic manners before he was sole emperor. Bouffartigue claims to discern the beginnings of a tendency in Julian to abandon Hellenism as being a ship in danger, and to seek a sort of refuge amongst the "culturally advanced" barbarians of Egypt and the East.[6] However, as we shall see, the evidence does not bear this out. Julian is influenced by the *Chaldaean Oracles* and, to an extent, Mithraism. He certainly had a great respect for Egypt, and encouraged the observance of Egyptian pagan rites, but he never cites Egyptian ideas or teachings in his philosophical works.[7]

The terms of the Solar Pericope are quite specific: they cannot be taken to attribute a broad philosophy or theology to the Phoenicians. Yet, if it is valuable to test the authenticity of this passage, then we must examine what Julian meant when he said that sunlight comprises a pure mental action. But even before that, in order to understand the Solar Pericope, it is also necessary to consider the four other attested occasions on which Julian refers to the Phoenicians. These are the passages I refer to as the "Aphrodite Pericope", the "Semele Pericope", the "Edessa

[4] Bouffartigue (1992) pp. 482 and 666.

[5] Ammianus 16.7.6.

[6] This must be read together with Bouuffartigue's argument that Iamblichos was a more important influence on Julian than the relatively few references to him would suggest, and that Julian named Iamblichos less extensively because he was a "modern" and therefore of less compelling authority: Bouffartigue (1992) pp. 76, 277 and 666.

[7] Hornung (1999) p. 71 for the limited extent of Julian's interest in Egypt.

Pericope", and the "Arithmetic Pericope". The "Aphrodite Pericope" occurs in the *Hymn to King Helios*, where Julian affirms:

> ὀλίγα ἔτι περὶ Ἀφροδιτής, ἣν συνεφάπτεσθαι τῆς δημιουργίας τῷ θεῷ Φοινίκων ὁμολογοῦσιν οἱ λόγιοι, καὶ ἐγὼ πείθομαι.
>
> A few things (remain) yet, concerning Aphrodite, of whom the erudite among the Phoenicians speak as one, saying that she takes part with the god (sc. Helios) in the creation. And I believe them.[8]

The paragraphs which follow this sentence form an integrated piece, leading to Julian's statement of his source for Phoenician ideas. The goddess is, he says, a σύγκρασις τῶν οὐρανίων θεῶν—a blending of the gods of the sky. She is the φιλία καὶ ἕνωσις of their ἁρμονία—the love and unity of their harmony. That is, the gods of the sky have separate functions, but when they act as one, they are considered to be Aphrodite. Their blending in itself forms a force or a virtue, which he calls φιλία καὶ ἕνωσις, and for Julian, this too, is Aphrodite. The generation of life is due to Helios, for Helios "holds (or 'possesses') within himself the first-working cause"—ἔχει τὴν πρωτουργὸν αἰτίαν. While "Aphrodite" is, literally, below Helios, she works with him as a causal agent; thus Julian affirms that she is συναίτιος (150B). Julian then states that he has been drawing these ideas from the θεολογία, the "theology", of the Phoenicians (150C).

Discussion of "first causes" sounds distinctly Platonist, if not Neoplatonist (and that distinction is itself a modern one). But the idea that life begins in the sun, and that a goddess has a role in it, is not by any means necessarily Platonist. That is, the language of "first causes" might well be Platonist, but the idea of "causes" *per se* is not. Julian as a Neoplatonist will naturally use the terminology of Neoplatonism. But the substance of his argument may yet be authentically Phoenician. As we shall see, it is important to interrogate the sources, as it were, to try and learn what the Phoenicians may have meant in speaking of terms such as "mind", "harmony", "love", and "unity". Although it is limited, there is

[8] *Hymn to King Helios* 150B. Wright (1913) p. 411 translates: "I have still to say a few words about Aphrodite, who, as the wise men among the Phoenicians affirm, and as I believe, assists Helios in his creative function".

indeed more information on this point than one might have thought.

Julian follows the Aphrodite Pericope with an argument drawn from a practice in the temple of Helios at Edessa, and declares that he has this on the authority of Iamblichos, and, indeed, "all else"—τἄλλα πάντα.[9] This phrase is found embedded in what I term the "Edessa Pericope".

> ἔτι μετριάσαι βούλομαι τῆς Φοινίκων θεολογίας· εἰ δὲ μὴ μάτην, ὁ λόγος προϊὼν δείξει. οἱ τὴν Ἔδεσσαν οἰκοῦντες, ἱερὸν ἐξ αἰῶνος Ἡλίου χωρίον, Μόνιμον αὐτῷ καὶ Ἄζιζον συγκαθιδρύουσιν. αἰνίτεσθαί φησιν Ἰάμβλιχος, παρ' οὗ καὶ τἄλλα πάντα ἐκ πολλῶν μικρὰ ἐλάβομεν, ὡς ὁ Μόνιμος μὲν Ἑρμῆς εἴη, Ἄζιζος δὲ Ἄρης, Ἡλίου πάρεδροι, πολλὰ καὶ ἀγαθὰ τῷ περὶ γῆν ἐποχετεύοντες τόπῳ.
>
> Τὰ μὲν οὖν περὶ τὸν οὐρανὸν ἔργα τοῦ θεοῦ τοιαῦτά ἐστι, καὶ διὰ τούτων ἐπιτελούμενα μέχρι τῶν τῆς γῆς προήκει τελευταίων ὅρων·[10]
>
> I yet wish to measure[11] more from the Phoenician theology. As to whether that is not useless, my argument will show as it goes on. Those who dwell at Edessa,[12] a place sacred to Helios from ages past, make joint consecrations to him (i.e., Helios) and to Monimos and Azizos. Wrapped up in riddles, says Iamblichos, from whom I have taken all else too—a little from an abundance, is that Monimos is (identical with) Hermes and Azizos with Ares, (and they are those who) sit beside Helios. It is they who conduct many things, especially good things,[13] to the place about the earth. Therefore such as these are the works of this god round about heaven, and when these works are completed through these (i.e., Monimos and Azizos) they advance even to the furthest boundaries of the earth.

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[9] *Hymn to King Helios* 150D.

[10] *Hymn to King Helios* 150C-D.

[11] I restore here the reading of the original manuscript: Wright (1913) p. 412.

[12] Again, I restore the original manuscript's reading: Wright (1913) p. 412.

[13] Admittedly an awkward translation, but an attempt to render the force of the καί which is deliberately positioned between πολλά and ἀγαθά.

This pericope is not as important as the other two for my thesis, yet it is significant. First, it provides good reason to see in Iamblichos the source of the Solar and Aphrodite Pericopes. Second, it confirms the notion that the sun and the deities of the sky were important in Phoenician religion. However, there are a number of problems associated with this pericope, as we shall see when it is dealt with in more detail.

The fourth of these "Phoenician pericopes", the "Semele Pericope", is found in the seventh oration: *To the Cynic Herakleios*. Julian sets out the myth of Dionysos' birth, and then abruptly remarks at 220D:

> τί οὖν οὐ καταβάλλοντες τὸν λῆρον ἐκεῖνο πρῶτον ὑπὲρ τούτων ἴσμεν, ὡς Σεμέλη σοφὴ τὰ θεῖα; παῖς γὰρ ἦν Κάδμου τοῦ Φοίνικος, τούτοις δὲ καὶ ὁ θεὸς σοφιάν μαρτυρεῖ· Πολλὰς καὶ Φοίνικες ὁδοὺς μακάρων ἐδάησαν λέγων.
>
> Why therefore not leave off that silly talk? For first, we know this: that Semele was wise in divine matters. For she was the child of Kadmos the Phoenician, and the god testifies to the wisdom of these people, saying: Many are the ways of the blessed (gods) the Phoenicians learnt…[14]

The Semele Pericope includes a quote from a longer oracle, which is preserved in Eusebius. The fifth and final reference to the Phoenicians in Julian is found in *Against the Galileans,* perhaps Julian's best known work. There Julian attacked what he saw as the presumption of the Hebrews. Julian conceded that the divine being has taken care of the Hebrews, but countered that the gifts he has bestowed upon them are as nothing compared to those vouchsafed to others. Here Julian refers to the wisdom of the Egyptians, Chaldeans, Assyrians, and Hellenes.[15] He claims that a certain body of theory, or θεωρία (which he does not define but effectively

[14] I note that Taylor, in his translation of this passage, interprets δῶ as "to show" i.e., "to teach" (1821) pp. 295–296, in the footnote. The reduplicated aorist of this verb bears the causal sense of teach, and is cognate with our word "didactic". But the fundamental sense of the verb, and hence of our aorist, is "to learn". There would be a slight, and not a significant, difference in meaning for our purposes. I have added the underlining to indicate the quotation.

[15] *Against the Galileans* 176A-C.

describes so as to suggest to the reader the discipline of astronomy), began in Babylon but was perfected by the Hellenes. Geometry began in Egypt but has since been augmented. Julian then provides another example:

> τὸ δὲ περὶ τοὺς ἀριθμοὺς ἀπὸ τῶν Φοινίκων ἐμπόρων ἀρξάμενον τέως εἰς ἐπιστήμης παρὰ τοῖς Ἕλλησι κατέστη πρόσχημα.
>
> The learning of numbers, beginning with Phoenician merchants, has now been rendered an ornament of science among the Hellenes.[16]

The Semele and Arithmetic Pericopes are the least important of all the Phoenician pericopes for my thesis. Their chief significance is that they aid us in ascertaining who it was that Julian referred to when he spoke of the "Phoenicians". The Arithmetic Pericope also helps to provide a fuller notion of Julian's view of the Phoenicians, particularly as compared to the Greeks. It would appear that this work is earlier than *Hymn to King Helios*. If it is, it might provide slender evidence that towards the end of his life, Julian started to lose his pro-Greek prejudices, and to value at least some of the barbarian cultures more highly.

This thesis opens by examining the Solar Pericope, and by placing it within as full a context as can be furnished. I conclude that this short text is probably a reliable statement of one idea which had been present in Phoenician religion, or as noted above, in Phoenician "theology" and "spirituality". The term "spirituality" is rarely encountered in historical studies of Phoenician religion. This thesis unequivocally reinstates the term. Although this study is fairly narrowly defined—it enquires whether the Solar Pericope represents authentically Phoenician ideas—I have found it necessary to pitch my study over a long historical perspective, including even the relevant surviving fragments of Ugaritic literature. It shall be seen that it is necessary to discuss the nature of ancient Ugaritic and Phoenician culture and religion, if only to meet the argument that the Phoenicians were not capable of this type of thought before their conquest by Alexander and subsequent saturation with Hellenic philosophy.

As neither the ideas of the Solar Pericope, nor identical concepts, are cited anywhere apart from in the *Hymn to King Helios*,

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[16] *Against the Galileans* 178B.

it is not possible to say exactly when this idea was first formulated in Phoenicia. However, for reasons I shall discuss, there are grounds to believe that the Phoenicians held refined theological ideas about the sun by the time of King Tabnit of Sidon (ca. 470-465 BCE) and his successor, Ešmunazor II (ca. 465-451 BCE). Although the evidence is slight, such ideas may go back even further. Later, ideas which are entirely consistent with the Solar Pericope are encountered in Mochos, writing no later than the Persian period. Philo of Byblos, writing later than Mochos, is valuable for certain ideas and traditions he preserved, and in particular, for allowing us to reconstruct certain lines of continuity between Ugarit and Phoenicia. It is one of the accidents of history that because Ugaritic theologians committed some of their literature to cuneiform tablets and baked these, a great deal of Ugaritic literature has survived in the original language. The later Phoenician culture has not been so fortunate. The thematic study of Ugaritic and Phoenician religion is limited to material which can throw light on the Solar Pericope and the background against which it might have emerged.

In the fragments of Eudemos and Mochos we find material which provides strong support for my thesis. These authors are preserved only in one short passage in Damaskios, and their importance has been underestimated, but they are dealt with here in some detail.

The next chapter addresses the threshold issues of Julian and the Solar Pericope.

CHAPTER 2
JULIAN AND THE "SOLAR PERICOPE"

Julian, Emperor of Rome, wrote the *Hymn to King Helios* in December 362 CE,[1] and dedicated it to his friend and praetorian prefect, Salutius (also spelled as Sallust).[2] Julian's description of the work is quite important. Julian opens the *Hymn* by declaring that this writing (λόγος) is of the greatest importance for all animate creatures, and particularly, those with a rational soul (λογικῆς ψυχῆς).[3] By contrast, his *Hymn to the Mother of the Gods*, with which it may in many respects be compared, does not include such a declaration.

Further, it is practically certain that Salutius was also the philosopher whose small "catechism" of refined paganism, *Concerning the Gods and the Universe*, has survived.[4] In 363, Julian honored Salutius in an exceptional way when he made Salutius his colleague in the consulship.[5] Salutius, for his part, seems to have reciprocated Julian's affection and respect. They first met and worked together when Julian was sent to Gaul, and, although they were separated by Constantius, they were reunited once Julian became emperor. Salutius was with Julian on his final campaign. After Julian's death, Salutius was the generals' first choice for emperor, however, he declined the purple. Instead, Jovian, who

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[1] Athanassiadi-Fowden (1981) p. 148, and Smith (1995) p. 144.

[2] On Salutius, see Athanassiadi-Fowden (1981) p. 68 and n. 74; Browning (1976) pp. 77 and 139-140, and Fowden (1979) pp. 237-238. On the intellectual relationship between Julian and Salutius, see also Athanassiadi-Fowden and Frede (1999) p. 9. The known details of Salutius' career are conveniently gathered in Jones, Martindale and Morris (1971) pp. 814-817, under "Saturninius Secundus Salutius 3".

[3] *Hymn to King Helios* 130B.

[4] This work has been edited, translated and commented upon: Nock (1926). Bowersock (1978) p. 125 disputes the identification of the two men, but does not consider the contents of *Concerning the Gods*.

[5] Ammianus 23.1.1.

was a Christian, was appointed.[6] The *Hymn to King Helios* was, therefore, dedicated to one of Julian's closest intimates. From this alone, we could safely infer that Julian considered it to be a significant effort.

The identification of Julian's friend Salutius with the author of *Concerning the Gods* provides some much needed context for the *Hymn to King Helios*. That identification rests upon the following points: first, no other Salutius known to us is a possible candidate for authorship of *Concerning the Gods*. Second, Salutius is known to have been a scholar and a thinker, who even came to neglect his official duties in favor of his studies.[7] Third, and, I think, making the case for identification virtually certain, there are striking similarities between certain ideas found in Julian and in *Concerning the Gods*. The most prominent points are to be found in the defence of mythology (especially upon the basis that myths challenge the intellect to seek the truth which lies hidden beneath the outward form),[8] and the linking of Attis with the Milky Way, and his castration with the point at which the processes of the generation of life cease to be fecund.[9]

The *Hymn to King Helios* is marked by a certain exaltation in tone and language. First, there is the bold announcement of its sublime gravity, enhanced with a citation from Homer, and a declaration that Julian himself is an attendant (ὀπαδός) of King Helios. As we shall see below, the piece itself proceeds "with no middle flight", to expound conceptions and almost mystical insights into the very nature and order of the universe. Just as critical for understanding it, the close of the text is most solemn. Julian apostrophizes Salutius, and declares that as the power of the

[6] Smith (1995) p. 9. It is an interesting thought that had Salutius accepted this nomination, Julian's paganizing agenda could have been continued.

[7] Eunapios of Sardis 479.

[8] Compare the treatment in Salutius *Concerning the Gods and the Universe* III with Julian's *To the Cynic Herakleios* 222C-D. This argument is apparently first attested in Vergil, but it is quite rare, and hence its occurrence in both Julian and Salutius warrants comment: Nock (1926) pp. xliii-xlv.

[9] Compare *Concerning the Gods and the Universe* IV and Julian's *Hymn to the Mother of the Gods* 161C-D, 165B-C and 167D. The latter similarities are noted by Wright (1913a) p. 461 nn. 3 and 4.

deity is threefold (a constant theme of this work), so also it was composed over three nights. Its purpose was not, he modestly asserts, to instruct, but to express his gratitude to the god; and in this vein, he closes with three prayers to Helios (εὔχομαι οὖν τρίτον).[10] The *Hymn to the Mother of the Gods* likewise closes with a prayer and petition (but does not refer to threefoldness).

As Bowersock said, it comprises "… a sustained utterance of great piety …".[11] So the *Hymn to King Helios* is an important part of Julian's oeuvre, but it is necessary to consider Julian and to place the *Hymn*, and the Solar Pericope in particular, in context.

JULIAN

Julian was born into the royal family of the Roman Empire in 331 or 332 CE,[12] and was slain in 363, while he was sole emperor. His father, Julius Constantius, had been one of the Emperor Constantine's half-brothers.[13] Julian is often known by the unflattering sobriquet "the Apostate", not only because he abandoned the Christianity of his childhood in favor of paganism, but also because he made such an impact upon the empire that he alone of all the host of apostates of the late Roman world[14] was so signally designated. Julian enraged Christians and yet he also infuriated many pagans. Today he is, together with Constantine and Justinian, the best known of the late Roman emperors. Certainly he has inspired more modern literature in the wider marketplace than either of these two, most famously, perhaps, poetry by Swinburne and a novel by Vidal.

Today, it is difficult to appreciate how controversial Julian's reversion to paganism was throughout the empire. Indeed, "controversial" is too weak a word for an eighteen month reign

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[10] *Hymn to King Helios* 158A-B.

[11] Bowersock (1978) p. 103. This is Bowersock's only reference to this hymn.

[12] Probably 331 *per* Smith (1995) p. 1, and 332 *per* Lieu (1989) p. ix.

[13] Julian's position in the royal family, and his early relations with his relatives through to his accession to the throne are clearly dealt with in Smith (1995) pp. 1-4.

[14] For a concise account of this aspect of Julian's reign, and for the necessary biographical details, see Cameron (1993) pp. 85-98.

which caused such frenzy and partisanship.[15] Yet the man who aroused these passions was also known among his contemporaries for his "native mildness",[16] and has given modern scholars cause to observe that he was "highly intellectual".[17] Julian gives credit to Maximos of Ephesus for having taught him the poets and philosophy.[18] From the context, this must be taken to mean that Maximos taught him a philosophical interpretation of the Greek poets.[19] Further, his letter to Himerios on the death of Himerios' wife displays an intelligent sympathy.[20]

THE GENRE OF THE *HYMN TO KING HELIOS*

Considerations of genre are important in historical studies. In the modern disciplines of the humanities, genre studies have proved to be tenacious despite some very high profile skeptics who—in the name of authorial creativity—deny the existence of genre. Genre studies have survived, perhaps precisely because of an awareness that these considerations can be pushed too far:

> … in studying generic patterns, like psychological ones, we always need to qualify our generalizations about the type with close and sympathetic observations about the individual human being or the individual work before us. For generic categories rarely provide simple answers to problems about literature—but they regularly offer us one of the surest and most suggestive means of seeking those answers.[21]

Another important aspect of genre theory is the recognition that genres are not necessarily exclusive, for the one piece of

[15] Modern views of Julian can often be shaped by reading him in the light of subsequent events. Thus, Lieu speaks of Julian's efforts to "revive traditional Roman religion and classical … culture against the prevailing tide of inexorable Christianization …", Lieu (1989) p. vii. But how can one say that the "prevailing tide" was "inexorable" except by hindsight?

[16] Ammianus 16.5.

[17] Cameron (1993) p. 95.

[18] *To the Cynic Herakleios* 235A-D. Maximos is not named, but Wright is correct to understand that this is a reference to him.

[19] Athanassaidi-Fowden (1981) p. 31 on Maximos.

[20] Letter 69 in Wright (1923).

[21] Dubrow (1982) p. 118.

literature may simultaneously fall within several genres.[22] It is a convention, that when identifying features of several genres within the document, scholars refer to each of the sub-units which exhibit the various features, as a "form". For example, a work like T. S. Eliot's *Murder in the Cathedral*, considered as a whole, belongs to the genre of the "play", but its texture includes various forms, such as the poem and the homily.

To some extent, every scholar labors under assumptions about genre when writing; and this is not to be deplored—it is necessary. For example, the author of an article in the *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* has the perfectly valid assumption that the article will not be read as comedy. Genre is important because it is a part the context of any document, and that context, in turn, provides us with an orientation and a methodology with which to evaluate the document and possibly clear up points of ambiguity.

At the start of this chapter, some brief comments were made on the nature of the *Hymn to King Helios.* To expand on these, it should be observed that the *Hymn to King Helios* is known today as a "hymn", and, in fact, it was so described by Julian.[23] He also described it as a λόγος,[24] a "word", and metaphorically, "a statement, speech", and even a "reasoned account". Its title in Greek is εἰς τὸν βασίλεα Ἥλιον πρὸς Σαλούστιον ("To the King Helios, for Salutius"). Fauth states:

> … nicht den Charakter einer theoretisch fundierten, systematisch angelegten Lehrschrift besitzt, wegen ihrer prosaichen Form aber auch nicht als "Humnos" im Sinne eines individuell oder liturgisch disponierten Gebets gelten kann, sondern die Kennzeichen einer weitgehend improvisierten …[25]

What, for Julian, was a hymn? In Greek literature, the early history of this word is obscure. It suffices that there is no doubt that by the fourth century BCE the word came to mean a musical lyric in praise of gods and heroes.[26]

While one might think pre-eminently of the *Homeric Hymns* and the hymns of Kallimachos, Julian's *Hymn to King Helios* clearly

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[22] Longman (1991) pp. 15-17.
[23] *Hymn to King Helios* 158A.
[24] *Hymn to King Helios* 130B and 158A.
[25] Fauth (1995) p. 147.
[26] See the authorities cited in Furley (1995) esp. at pp. 29-31.

represents a development within the genre from these works. First, it is written in prose, not verse. Secondly, it is not meant to be used in a cultic setting: it is a work of literature in its own right, as its dedication to Salutius shows. There is no evidence that it was ever read aloud in public or elsewhere, and so it would seem to be meant to be studied. Thirdly, it clearly could not have been accompanied by a musical instrument, a feature which was considered essential to the ancient hymn. These were almost always accompanied by the lyre (or a lyre-like instrument). The dithyramb in honor of Dionysos was sung to the sound of a flute or similar instrument.[27] Fourthly, it is philosophical to a degree that these others are not. Finally, it is extraordinarily longer than these earlier "hymns".

As a whole, I would say that the *Hymn to King Helios* can only be considered as a philosophical treatise. And yet, there are points of contact between this "hymn" and earlier ones. As Furley observes, even in Hesiod there is an attempt to combine "traditional verse form, including the hymnic address of a deity, with speculative thought to express insights into the nature of the universe and man's place in it".[28] This is not the place for an exhaustive analysis of this issue, but while Furley has a valid point, it seems to me that the degree of "speculative thought" in the *Hymn to King Helios* so far surpasses anything in Hesiod, that it belongs to an utterly different genre (or set of genres). However, a full and balanced review would be needed to do justice to the history of the Greek hymn.[29]

Perhaps the surviving piece which most directly anticipated the *Hymn to King Helios* is the Stoic Kleanthes' hymn to Zeus. This elevated piece, indeed, refers to its own dynamic with the verb ὑμνεῖν and a participle derived from it—ὑμνοῦντες—twice at the very end, at lines 37 and 39.[30] This, as noted, was written by a philosopher.

The dedication of the *Hymn to King Helios* to Salutius reminds us that that author wrote a pagan "catechism". There is reason to

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[27] Furley (1993) p. 23.

[28] Furley (1993) p. 38.

[29] This is not to imply that Furley is unaware that the genre sees a development: (1993) pp. 38-39.

[30] *SVF* vol. 1, # 537 (p. 122). It is odd that Julian's hymns are not mentioned by *Der Neue Pauly* under the heading "Hymnos, Hymnus".

suspect that this small work was written between March and June 362.[31] This treatise deals with the basics of classical polytheism (at that time defensive in the face of expanding Christianity), causing one to wonder whether either that work or Julian's *Hymn to King Helios* was not meant to complement the other.

So, Julian's hymns to Helios and the Mother of the Gods do not seem to fall squarely within a tradition dominated by the genre of hymnography, even if it employs the form of a hymn particularly at the close, and also, to an extent, the beginning. That Julian called it a "hymn" alerts us to how he wanted this philosophical treatise to be read and accepted. It seems to me to be significant that the actual living tradition of composing and performing the Greek hymn died out in the fourth century CE.[32] By the time of Julian, the pagan hymn was becoming an increasingly literary phenomenon. In fact, we know that Julian was concerned to revive and maintain the classical traditions of sacred music. In one of his letters to Ekdikios, prefect of Egypt, Julian orders him to take steps, and quite expensive ones at that, to cultivate sacred music among the youth of Alexandria.[33]

I do not think that Bouffartigue's analysis of the genre of *Hymn to King Helios* is necessarily inconsistent with mine. Bouffartigue refers to the *Hymn to King Helios* as a piece of "rhetoric" which is in the nature of a "hymne physique". He follows Wright, who had referred to the brief discussion of the genre by Menander the Rhetor.[34] Bouffartigue notes that one of these hymns was said to be in honor of Apollo as sun.[35] However, a reading of the relevant passages in Menander proves disappointing if one is looking for comparative material to aid a study of Julian's *Hymn to King Helios.* The treatise in question is the first attributed to Menander of Laodicea-on-Lycus, called *Division of Epideictic Speeches.*[36] Menander's date is uncertain, but he was

[31] Reale (1990) pp 542-543, n. 16.

[32] Bremer (1981) pp. 211-212.

[33] Letter 49 in Wright (1923).

[34] Wright (1913a) p. 348. Smith (1995) p. 144 also believes the *Hymn to King Helios* to take the form of a *physikos hymnos* on the nature of Helios.

[35] Bouffartigue (1992) p. 540.

[36] See Russell and Wilson (1981) p. xi. Russell and Wilson provide much the fullest available commentary on Menander, and the difficult questions of authorship and textual integrity.

probably writing in the late third century CE, fully 60 years before Julian.[37] Russell and Wilson translate the relevant section of the *Division of Epideictic Speeches* as "Scientific Hymns".[38] Menander's own term is ὕμνοι φυσιλογικοί, "nature discourse hymns".[39]

Menander names Parmenides, Empedokles, and Plato as amongst those who have composed such hymns.[40] Of the surviving works of these writers, the prose discourse on the soul which ends with a prayer to Eros, and which Plato puts in the mouth of Sokrates in his *Phaedros*, does bear some resemblance to Julian's piece, although it is much shorter than the *Hymn to King Helios*.[41] Menander also notes that Plato considered the *Timaios* to be a "hymn of the universe" (ὕμνον τοῦ Παντὸς). Oddly, Menander states that this type of hymn is better suited to the talents of poets as opposed to prose writers.[42] This does not mean that a hymn could not be written in prose: clearly it could in Menander's canon, and he observes that some hymns are treatises. However, he did not think that these efforts had been successful, and recommended that they be kept from the general public who would deplore them.[43]

The category "rhetoric" is broader than that of the "hymne physique": at its widest, rhetoric is simply the art of persuasion by words.[44] Epideictic rhetoric refers to any rhetoric which:

> … does not aim at a specific action or decision but seeks to enhance knowledge, understanding, or belief, often through praise or blame, whether of persons, things or values. It is thus an important part of cultural or group cohesion. Most religious preaching, except when specifically aimed at a future action on the part of the audience such as receiving baptism or at the judgment of some past action as requiring excommunication … can be viewed as epideictic.[45]

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[37] Russell and Wilson (1981) p. xl.

[38] Russell and Winterbottom (1972) p. 579, Kennedy (1997a) p. 36.

[39]Menander in Russell and Wilson (1981) 337:4.

[40] Menander in Russell and Wilson (1981) 337:6-7.

[41] *Phaidros* 244a-257b.

[42] Menander in Russell and Wilson (1981) 336:29-337:2.

[43] Menander in Russell and Wilson (1981) 337:22-29.

[44] Kennedy (1997a) in Porter (1997) p. 3. Other definitions are discussed at pp. 3-7.

[45] Kennedy (1997b) p. 45.

It is clear that there can be overlap between the "hymne physique" and works of other genres, such as the philosophic protreptic, and the sermon or homily.[46] But it is not necessary to consider these in detail: the *Hymn to King Helios* as a whole is clearly best viewed as a philosophical treatise, and therefore rhetorical. It includes some of the features of the hymn, but even more so, it aims at the feeling of a hymn. Further, this work, which is hymnic in part, aims at a certain mystic quality. For example, Julian contends that Helios is also Okeanos, who was described by Homer as the parent of all which has existence.[47] He then rhetorically asks whether he should explain himself, and decides that he should, but not before he significantly declares that silence would be better: καίτοι σιωπᾶσθαι κρεῖσσον ἦν.

This conjures shades of the ancient mysteries, which were guarded about by the pious secrecy demanded of initiates.[48] Julian makes another feint in the same direction later in the *Hymn to King Helios*, when he declares that he will believe rather than demonstrate the truth of this sublime teaching, but that it may be hymned by other persons: ὑμνείσθω.[49] Wright captures the mood of this passage when he translates, imprecisely: "let others celebrate in fitting strains". The religious, even mystical, character of the *Hymn to King Helios*, is therefore quite real, even if it is not the dominant element in the work.[50]

One could almost describe the *Hymn to King Helios* as meandering, but study shows that there is a definite flow to it. It commences by relating details from Julian's childhood which

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[46] The literature on these topics is vast. For a detailed overview, see Porter (1997).

[47] *Hymn to King Helios* 147D-148A. When Julian refers to Okeanos as "lord of two fold substance / being", he probably alludes to the tradition that "Oceanus is the place where sky and earth meet …": Burkert (1979) p. 84.

[48] For a brief treatment of the importance of secrecy to the ancient Greek mysteries, see Vernant and Vidal-Naquet (1990) pp. 386-387.

[49] *Hymn to King Helios* 152B.

[50] In a well known passage, *Hymn to the Mother of the Gods* 172D-173A, Julian says that he will keep silence in respect of the "secret teaching of the Mysteries in which the Chaldaean, divinely frenzied, celebrated the God of the Seven Rays … familiar to the happy theurgists". (Wright's translation). Julian says that he will have to discipline himself to a Pythagorean silence in letter 30 (Wright 1923).

pertain to the sun god, and only after autobiographical details have set the scene does Julian come to the occasion of his composition: the feast of "Sol Invictus".[51] The body of the piece tries to show that Helios always was central to the religion of Greece and Rome, and thus, one can infer, that the modern feast, although it seems to be new, is in fact entirely traditional. This central portion of the work shall be dealt with in more detail below. At the end, Julian returns to his own situation, and offers a rather touching prayer, although, as Fauth states, this does not characterize the entire piece. However, it does bear out Julian's own assertion that he is expressing thanks to Helios by setting out his understanding of that deity, so that his subjects might also learn to love him.[52] It also dovetails with my own view that Julian is aiming for the sentiment of a hymn. At times, Julian does succeed in achieving a hymn-like feeling, but too much of such feeling would make it impossible to sustain the intellectual level of his self-appointed task. That is, Julian used both philosophy and poetry to explain the true nature of Helios, and how his cult relates to the cults of the other deities.

We learn from the above consideration of genre that the *Hymn to King Helios* was meant to be read as a serious, and indeed, as a solemn λόγος or text. For Julian it was an attempt to vindicate the religious and philosophical traditions he loved, and to express his gratitude to the deity. Suffice it to say that we have here another example of the blending of the mythic, religious, and spiritual worlds with the domain of rational philosophy. The theological literature of the ancient world simply will not sit quietly within our categories, and there is no good reason why it should.

It is true to the document, therefore, to consider the Phoenician pericopes in their own precise terms, and to consider what other material may be available to assess their authenticity. I think the study of genre yields one further, perhaps more critical, clue for our understanding of the *Hymn to King Helios.* The work announces in itself the integration of what had hitherto been diverse elements of the religious and philosophical tradition of the ancient world. Just as it connects the genres of hymn and prayer with that of philosophical discourse, so too, it connects polytheism and transcendent monotheism. Julian connects here the sun god

[51] *Hymn to King Helios* 131B-132D.

[52] *Hymn to King Helios* 158A-C.

Helios with all of the chief deities of the ancient world, and unites the public, private, and mystery cults in one theoretical structure. Likewise, he connects the Greeks and the Romans, declaring that in γένος τὲ καὶ πολιτείαν ("race and government") the city of Rome is Greek, and towards the close of the hymn, throws a net over all the empire he ruled.[53]

Neither can it be forgotten that in all of this there is also a political motive, Julian's polemic and policy against Christianity.[54] One element in his counter-Christian thinking was the exclusivity of the claims of the Christians, something which they took over from the Hebrews.[55] All peoples have a conception of the divine, and pray to their gods.[56] God has bestowed gifts on all of his people, not only on the Hebrews; indeed not even especially upon the Hebrews.[57] It will be recalled that it was in this context that Julian wrote the material which I have abstracted as the "Arithmetic Pericope".

The devotion of the sun, who shines on all, complements the project of the *Hymn to King Helios* and Julian's entire imperial policy to unite his subjects and eventually cause the expiration of Christianity, a policy in which the *Hymn to King Helios* probably played some modest role. Even then, non-Hellenistic elements are used most sparingly and the Chaldeans and Egyptians are shown as having commenced certain lines of enquiry which were perfected by Greeks, just as in the Arithmetic Pericope the Greeks perfected the arithmetic the Phoenicians invented.[58] It is relevant, too, that, shortly after the Semele Pericope, Julian makes a point of stressing that Zeus wished to instigate a new order for all humanity, and perhaps with that end in mind, caused Dionysos to come from

[53] *Hymn to King Helios* 153A and 157B. Johansen (1998) p. 565 also stresses that *Hymn to King Helios* "unites scholasticism with religiosity" and "the inheritance from just about everywhere". I am obliged to Dr. P. Brennan for pointing out to me that, as in this instance, politei/a carries the sense of "way of life".

[54] Johansen (1998) p. 565 mentions this with reference to some of the ideas in *Hymn to King Helios.*

[55] *Against the Galilaeans* 106A-C.

[56] *Against the Galilaeans* 52C and 69B-C.

[57] *Against the Galilaeans* 176A-178B.

[58] *Hymn to King Helios* 156B.

India.[59] Yet, when he comes, the new diety is integrated into the existing tradition: he does not introduce Indian elements.

A discriminating and hierarchical inclusiveness—with Hellenism firmly at the apex—was therefore a mark of Julian's thought, which thought can be subtle and deep. I would not necessarily agree with the view that Julian was "certainly neither a creative philosopher nor a major author".[60] However that may be, it nonetheless remains that the Phoenician elements added to the *Hymn to King Helios* are introduced by Julian as extraneous to his Hellenic materials, as we shall see below. Beyond even this, there is the issue of whether the ideas of the Solar Pericope were authentically Phoenician.

The *Hymn to King Helios* deals, amongst other matters, with the position of the sun in the cosmos. In the context of Julian's intellectual world, and as stated in his own work, we understand that "the sun" of which he writes is the physical sun of which we are sensible. But it is not only that sun. It is also "the sun" of other, invisible levels of existence, and each of these suns is related. When we examine it, the Solar Pericope will begin to reveal layers of meaning, for it has been placed in a rich, almost mystical setting.

THE SOLAR PERICOPE

The Solar Pericope needs to be considered in its context. In parts, the *Hymn to King Helios* is autobiographical. In fact, the details of Julian's youth disclosed here have something of the whiff of an *apologia*, for Julian relates his religious and spiritual ideas to the course of his life, thus demonstrating his apparent sincerity. In a short passage at 130C-131D, Julian describes how, as a child, the sun in particular, and also the heavens, had been of a deep spiritual importance to him. Yet he had never been instructed in astrology and—at that time—had been exposed only to the ideas of Christianity.[61] He came to realize that he had been born into a family dedicated to the service of the sun, which afforded to him

[59] *To the Cynic Herakleios* 221B.

[60] Dihle (1994) p. 456. This is not the place to launch a full discussion of this question.

[61] He diplomatically draws a veil over the Christianity of his early years, a discretion which shows that he could be tactful, although it was unnecessary given his position as emperor (131A).

the opportunity to affect the world for the better. In these short passages, he manages, artfully and lightly, to convey a sense of *destiny* and dedication to *service*. Only when he has said this does he invoke the Muses and gods, and commence his main theme at 131D-132C (ἀρκτέον δὲ ἐνθένδε—"one must begin from here").[62]

This passage is paralleled, to a certain extent, by the myth which he sets out in his seventh oration *To the Cynic Herakleios*. I would particularly point to one passage where Zeus says to Helios, that "this one" (i.e., Julian) is "your offspring": τοῦτο, ἔφη, σόν εστιν ἔκγονον.[63] Zeus entrusts the child to Helios, and Helios for his part is pleased as he can perceive that in the new-born child "a small splinter from himself (i.e., Helios) had still been saved in him (i.e., Julian) and from then he maintained that small child": σωζόμενον ἔτι καθορῶν ἐν αὐτῷ σπινθῆρα μικρὸν ἐξ ἑαυτοῦ, καὶ τὸ ἐντεῦθεν ἔτρεφεν ἐκεῖνο τὸ παιδίον …[64]. In the same dialogue, when Julian wishes to stress a particular point which he has already made on the authority of Plato, Plotinos, Porphyry, and "the inspired Iamblichos" (ὁ δαιμόνιος Ἰάμβλιχος), he makes an oath "by my lord Helios": μὰ τὸν ἐμὸν δεσπότην Ἥλιον.[65] When Julian rebukes the people of Alexandria for asking him to allow Athanasios to return, he harangues them, with some fervor, in the name of Helios, asking whether they alone do not perceive the beams he sends down and his centrality in the universe.[66]

Julian's reverence for the sun is also an important factor which leads to and is expressed in his "Edict on Funerals". In this edict, probably promulgated prior to the Latin recension which is dated 12 February 363,[67] Julian ordered that funerals be conducted only by night. Several reasons are given, but the purity of the day (ἡ δὲ ἡμέρα καθαρὰ) was a critical consideration, and is cited at the close of the edict.[68] This all underscores the importance of Helios

[62] Citing *Hymn to King Helios* 132C.

[63] *To the Cynic Herakleios* 229C.

[64] *To the Cynic Herakleios* 229D. I translate τρέφω as "maintain", as it seems truer to the context, and is used by Aischylos of Helios to describe the way the sun maintains the health of the land (see LSJ under the entry τρέφω).

[65] *To the Cynic Herakleios* 222B-C.

[66] Letter 47 in Wright (1923) esp. at 434B-D.

[67] Wright (1923) p. 190, n. 2.

[68] Wright (1923) sets it out at as letter 56 (it is not a letter).

for Julian, whom he refers to by that name, and not as Helios-Mithras.[69]

There is, therefore, good reason to believe that Julian is sincere in his devotion to Helios: we are not dealing with a mere literary flourish. Once Julian has established his premises, he proceeds by poetically declaring that "the divine and all-beautiful cosmos", at 132C of *King Helios* (ὁ θεῖος οὗτος καὶ πάγκαλος κόσμος), is held together by "divine providence" or "foresight". The English translation does not disclose that the note struck here by the words τοῦ θεοῦ προνοίας (132C) will be picked up very soon afterwards in the Phoenician Pericope. For Julian, the cosmos comprises a unity; he states this most effectively at 139B: Ἓν παντελῶς τὸ νοητὸν ἀεὶ προϋπάρχων, τὰ δὲ πάντα ὁμοῦ συνειληφὸς ἐν τῷ ἑνί. "The intelligible is completely One, always existent,[70] comprehending all things together in its unity".

This unity is an essential reality: it subsists behind the world of appearances. For Julian, multiplicity means impermanence, and this would ordinarily lead to the decay of the sensible universe, for the unchanging alone is eternal, while the sensory world is one of endless change. This, as is well known, follows from basic Platonic principles. According to Aristotle, (and there is reason to accept him in this respect) Plato was impressed by Herakleitos' doctrine of flux, a teaching which came to him through Kratylos. As Plato developed it, the idea seems to have passed through several phases. However, in the dialogue named *Kratylos*, he wrote in a very difficult passage:

> Ἀλλὰ μὴν οὐδ᾽ ἂν γνωσθηέιη γε ὑπ᾽ οὐδενός. ἅμα γὰρ ἂν ἐπιόντος τοῦ γνωσομένου ἄλλο καὶ ἀλλοῖον γίγνοιτο, ὥστε οὐκ ἂν γνωσθείη ἔτι ὁποῖόν γέ τί ἐστιν ἢ πῶς ἔχον· γνῶσις δὲ δήπου οὐδεμία γιγνώσκει ὃ γιγνώσκει μηδαμῶς ἔχον.
>
> Truly neither could it (the changing) be known by anyone. For at the time one approaches to obtain knowledge of it, it becomes something other and different, so that one can still

[69] This is a curious misconception on the part of Bregman (1999) pp. 338 and 342. Bregman provides no reference for his understanding of Julian's diety as Helios-Mithras as opposed to Helios (sometimes correctly cited by him).

[70] The Greek stresses the word "One". Literally, Julian says that the intelligible is "always pre-existing".

> not learn what manner of thing it is or how it subsists; for indeed knowledge is not attainable for that concerning which knowledge can achieve no hold.[71]

Knowledge is knowledge of the "images of eternal realities" (τῶν ὄντων ἀεὶ μιμήματα, *Timaios* 50C).[72] One can more easily understand Julian when one understands that this line of thought is to be found in his Platonic tradition. Whatever is *becoming* is necessarily *passing away*. This is assumed in Julian's statement at 137C:

> Ὁ περὶ γῆν τόπος ἐν τῷ γίνεσθαι τὸ εἶναι ἔχει. τίς οὖν ἐστιν ὁ τὴν ἀιδιότηατα δωρούμενος αὐτῷ;

> The place round about the earth holds being which is in the (process of) becoming. Who then is it that presents (the quality of) everlastingness to it?[73]

The answer to this question refers us, again, to the rays of the sun. Three things guard the being of the cosmos. First, the continuing existence of the cosmos as a purely physical composition is made possible because of the properties of *aither*, the fifth "element" or "material substance". In speaking of this fifth element, Julian says that "(its) crown is the beam of the sun" τοῦ πέμπτου σώματος, οὗ τὸ κεφάλαιόν ἐστιν ἀκτὶς ἀελίου.[74] This is a reference to Aristotle's theory of the fifth element. For Plato, there were four elements.[75] However, Aristotle concluded that while there were four elements in this sublunary world, the heavens were made of aither, the fifth element. The four elements (air, earth, fire, and water) are, to a certain degree, antipathetic, for they have different qualities of cold, wet, hot, and dry. Were the

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[71] *Kratylos* 439d-440a. This is not the place to follow this thread through Plato's works. See the concise discussion in Coleman (1992) pp. 8-9.

[72] Gulley (1962) has a discussion of these and other passages at pp. 19, 26, 71-73, 82 and 132-134.

[73] Athanassiadi-Fowden (1981) p. 151, has some notes on "the mysterious unity of the universe" in Julian.

[74] 132C. There is a certain conscious artistic effect in the use of the phrase ἀκτὶς ἀελίου, I do not think it is so significant as to warrant more than noting that it came to Julian hallowed by use in Greek literature.

[75] See for example the *Timaios*, where this theory is rehearsed throughout.

vast heavens made of one of the sublunary elements, then that element with its property would overwhelm the others. Aither, however, has very different properties from any of the four earthly elements. Indeed, the heavenly bodies composed of aither were, for Aristotle, literally alive and divine.[76] For Julian, the "topmost" product of the fifth element is a ray of the sun. In the *Hymn to the Mother of the Gods*, Julian is more explicit, saying that the fifth element is closer to the gods than the four elements of the earth, and therefore more creative and more divine (δημιουργικώτερόν ἐστι … καὶ θειότερον).[77]

Second, cosmic unity is maintained by the "intelligible order" (τοῦ νοητοῦ κόσμου).[78] There will be further reference to this point, for there is a certain ambiguity in the Greek term κόσμος. Shortly, it comprises an ordered world, and like the English word "world" can refer either to the entire universe or to a smaller "world" which can be taken as an individual unit of the larger whole. This is not a trivial assertion, that is, Julian's statement is not open to criticism on the grounds that the order is in itself the unity and not the cause of unity. Rather, the intelligible order is a sort of relation between parts, and then those parts in just that relation comprise a unity. One can employ an analogy from baking: if there is too much flour or too little, the dough will not cohere and form a loaf of bread. For a unity (the loaf), one must have an order, a ratio between parts.

The third matter making for unity is "the King of all which is", a factor identified with "the One" and with Plato's "Idea of Being".[79] Much of *King Helios* relates to these factors: order and the One. These three causes of unity correspond to the fact that, for Julian, the cosmos—in the sense of the universe—is threefold. The triune cosmoses—in the sense of its major units—comprise:

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[76] For a discussion, see Lloyd (1968). I have checked Lloyd's references to the Aristotelian texts *On the Heavens* 270b5 ff, and 1, ch. 2 and II, ch. 12 generally, to *Meteorologicon* 340a1 ff, and to *Physics* 1074a38 ff. As they amply bear out his thesis, I see no need to establish the same again by setting out the original Greek.

[77] *Hymn to the Mother of the Gods* 166D, and also 167D-168A.

[78] *Hymn to King Helios* 132C.

[79] *Hymn to King Helios* 132C and D.

(a) a physical realm;

(b) a noetic realm, or an *intelligible world*, behind the material world, but sustaining it; and

(c) the world of the One in itself.

While this scheme is intrinsic to the intellectual system which lies behind *The Hymn to King Helios*, a fuller study and analysis of the metaphysics can be found in the secondary literature. Finamore, who assumes (not without some reason) that these views are those of Iamblichos, sees the scheme as effecting Iamblichos' reconciliation of the *Chaldaean Oracles* with Plato. Finamore concludes:

> The Chaldaean system included three realms: the Empyrean, the Ethereal, and the Hylic. Each of these realms has its own ruler: Aion, the Sun, and the Moon, respectively … The Chaldaeans viewed Aion as an invisible sun existing in the highest (Empyrean) realm. Aion was the Chaldaean's second god, ranked immediately after the Father (the supreme deity). Thus, Aion sends to the sun the noetic light of the Father.

On Finamore's analysis, then, the scheme presented throughout the *Hymn to King Helios* discloses that the Chaldean levels have been Platonized.[80] The *Chaldaean Oracles* are a large topic: it is not even clear which texts should be included among their number.[81] The texts are obscure, their manuscript tradition is complex, and previous scholarship is, in many respects, obsolete.[82] I shall summarize the conclusions of my research by saying that "Chaldean" does not simply mean "Babylonian". Rather, the term, in this late period, refers to a sophisticated blending of various concepts from Persia and Mesopotamia. This tradition was not alien to the classical philosophical tradition. As Kingsley

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[80] Finamore (1985) pp. 133-134. Finamore never considers whether Julian's Phoenician source was something other than Iamblichos (see p. 137). See also Athanassiadi-Fowden (1981) pp. 143-145 and 150; and Gersh (1986) p. 558.

[81] See Athahanssiadi (1999).

[82] Lewy's study (1978) is interesting. However, the book comprises papers and research in progress, posthumously edited by others after his death in 1945. There is no doubt that Lewy's work was profound, but there are some errors, and some citations are inaccurate.

penetratingly notes in *Ancient Philosophy, Mystery and Magic,* subtitled "Empedocles and Pythagorean Tradition", the fact of the matter is that:

> … the theurgists, far from just falling for the 'orientalizing craze' of the late Hellenistic period, were finding their inspiration in the same regions and types of lore that had provided much of the underpinning both for Empedocles' activities and for Pythagorean concerns over half a millennium earlier.[83]

A methodological problem confronts anyone searching for parallels to and influences upon the thought of any thinker, whether that thinker is Julian, the writer(s) of the *Chaldaean Oracles*, or otherwise. If one looks only in a certain direction, one may well find parallels. But the similarity may be due to any number of factors. It may be that other scholars who directed their research in different directions would also find parallels. Here I do not attempt to prove from where Julian obtained this particular idea about the Phoenician theology. For me, the chief issue is whether Julian is credible when he affirms that this concept is Phoenician. And if he is, who are his Phoenicians?

To return, then, to Julian, he considers the center of each order of reality to be a "sun". In subsequent chapters, I mount a contention, based upon Phoenician inscriptions, that the Phoenicians of the first millennium BCE may well have had a similar concept, although, as we shall see, the fragments by no means allow us to conclude that it was identical to Julian's philosophy. In Julian's thought, one order of reality corresponds to this material world, and so the corresponding sun in this world is the physical sun. In each of the other two orders of reality in Julian's universe the sun is a metaphorical one. In each of these three worlds, the sun is central to the processes of creation and also to the maintenance of its proper cosmos.[84] Thus each sun has a certain parallel function. This passage concludes by asserting that Helios the sun also has the role of going before and guiding (προκαθηγουμένη) all things to what is good for them, and directing them "according to reason" (κατὰ νοῦν).[85]

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[83] Kingsley (1995) p. 304. See also p. 303.

[84] *Hymn to King Helios* 132C-133C.

[85] *Hymn to King Helios* 133C.

Significantly, the pattern of each cosmos corresponds, in this manner at least, to the pattern of each of the others. It is therefore proper, on this view, to speak of all cosmoses from the perspective of knowledge of one cosmos: there is a parity among them. It seems to me from a reading of Julian, that although he never states this explicitly, he took the view that the closer to the ideal pattern a phenomenon, the purer that phenomenon is and the more it has in common with other phenomena of comparable purity. This would seem to follow not only from references to purity which we have noted in the *Hymn to King Helios* but also in the references to purity of temple-goers, the day, the Olympian gods, and deeds in the "Edict on Funerals." As he states, should people going to a temple meet a funeral cortege, they would need to cleanse themselves.[86] This may help us to understand better the purity of the rays of the sun in the Solar Pericope: they are ideal (or essential) in that they have not been mixed with the stuff of this world. To put it another way, at the time they discharge their function of endowing mental qualities in living creatures, they represent the divine pattern of the world and nothing else.

The visible Helios (φαινόμενος)—our visible sun—and the "great Helios" (μέγας) which is the metaphoric sun of the noetic realm, are alike in that they are the cause of the salvation of all beings and gods within their respective realms.[87] Of this fact there are "manifest proofs for one studying the invisible from what is apparent" (τούτων δ᾽ ἐναργεῖς αἱ πίστεις ἐκ τῶν φαινομένων τὰ ἀφανῆ σκοποῦντι).[88] Julian immediately proceeds to argue from the seen to the unseen, in a rather difficult passage. However, the basic meaning seems to me to be that light (φῶς) is a property of the heavenly bodies, which are made of the divine fifth element. It is a form (εἶδος) and thus underlies all the matter of the heavenly bodies.[89]

At this point, 134A, we find the "Solar Pericope". Julian immediately states that his discourse (λόγος) is in harmony with this, for he has demonstrated that light is incorporeal (ἀσώματον)

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[86] Wright (1923) letter 56.

[87] *Hymn to King Helios* 133C.

[88] *Hymn to King Helios* 133D. Note that Julian stresses the word ἐναργής "visible, palpable, manifest, distinct, etc."; a word used in Homer "properly of gods appearing in their own forms", LSJ.

[89] *Hymn to King Helios* 133D-134A.

and thus it cannot come from a "spring" (πηγή) which is corporeal. Its source must be the "immaculate action of mind" (at 134B he again uses the words νοῦ δὲ ἐνέργειον ἄχραντον) and the sun, in the middle of the sky (οὐρανοῦ τὸ μέσον), fills not only the spheres of the sky but all things (πάντα) with "divine and unstained (undefiled) light" (θείῳ καὶ ἀχράντῳ φωτί).[90] The purity of light and mind—cosmic elements which he identifies, at least when the light is "unstained" or "undefiled"—is important to Julian, and he returns to it again at 140CD. There the undefiled nature of the sun's rays reappears in a context which suggests that their cleanliness vouchsafes their origin in a world beyond death and birth.[91] I suggest that this is so because everything which is mixed with the matter of this world must pass away, in accordance with the Platonic ideas examined above.

Note, too, that at 134B Julian's precise word is not in fact *harmony*, as rendered by Wright (that is, Wright translates that Julian's discourse is in harmony with the Phoenician doctrine). The text reads: οὐκ ἀπᾴδει δὲ οὐδὲ ὁ λόγος. Julian uses a double negative, which in Greek does not make a positive, but rather, a more emphatic negative. The verb he uses is not one of the verbs for harmonizing, but is ἀπᾴδω φρομ ἀείδω, "to sing", with the prefixed preposition ἀπό–, which, in composite words means, among other things, "asunder, leaving off", and can possess a privative sense. Thus the first dictionary sense of ἀπᾴδω is "to sing out of tune".

I emphasize this because the use of this phrase, "And neither indeed does my discourse sing out of tune with this", makes it apparent that Julian considered the Phoenician doctrine to be exterior to the philosophy he is propounding.

That is, Julian's insistence on this point would have no meaning if he did not believe at least that the Solar Pericope represented an independent confirmation of his ideas. Incidentally, this is yet another indicator that although this text falls to be considered as a philosophical treatise, it includes the forms of other genres. For his part, Julian clearly intended that the piece should, at least in part, partake of the nature of a hymn.

[90] *Hymn to King Helios* 134B.

[91] While I must be selective in my consideration of Julian's ideas, there is always a question of judgment, for I must cover enough to provide a context for the Phoenician theology.

To be clear, then, in the *Hymn to King Helios*, Julian presents a vision of a universe which is comprised of three cosmoses, one behind the other. First in being, perfection, and entirely self-maintaining, is the realm of the One. This generates and sustains the noetic realm, where dwell the intelligible gods. The center of this cosmos is the deity Helios. In its turn, this world creates and maintains the visible world, the center of which is the sun. All these worlds are linked directly through their center and that center is the sun of each world. The triune cosmoses are characterized by intelligence (νοῦς) and emanation from the eternal One. In the course of that emanation, we find descending grades of permanence and materiality. Julian has much less to say about the One than he does about the intelligible realm, just as one would expect, because the One is so remote from us. But one can reason from the visible to the invisible, and it is at this point that Julian makes an appeal to the authority, or perhaps better, the prestige, of the Phoenicians.

The ideas expressed in the Solar Pericope are, then, important for the development of Julian's argument. Further, it serves Julian as a link between his ideas and the wisdom of an ancient people. Set within its context, this passage is also authority for the proposition that certain Phoenicians taught that one phenomenon can also be another phenomenon without compromising its original identity. To put it in algebraic terms, the Phoenicians could grasp and express the concept that A (the rays of the sun) are in fact also B (the activity of pure mind) although A and B appear different.

It is also implicit that the Phoenicians had a concept of degrees of purity of action and mind, otherwise Julian's adjectives in this pericope, ἄχραντον (unstained, undefiled, immaculate) and καθαρός (pure), have no sense. It can be seen that Julian is crediting the Phoenicians with a δόξα (opinion, theory) of philosophical sophistication. Equally, he is not attributing to them all of the schema. In this pericope, they are only another and further authority for one stated proposition.

This question of degrees of purity brings me to the issue of the kind of document from which the Solar Pericope might have come. Julian's insistence on the *purity* of mind, and its *immaculate* action suggest to me that the pericope may have been found within a poem or prose tract of a religious or philosophical character.

Further, he speaks of the "sunlight sent forth everywhere". If the Solar Pericope was originally located within a poem or a prose work of poetic character, such elaboration would be perfectly appropriate. At this late date, and with so little surviving literature, it is impossible to demonstrate that the Solar Pericope came from a work of some such description. The very fact that Julian is incorporating such ideas within a prose "hymn" proves that it is possible that the Phoenician theology was itself incorporated within a prose work.

However, we are able to compare the finished and descriptive prose of Julian's with the austere statements in various authors such as Ammianus and Macrobius to the effect that the sun is the mind of the world and a related concept enunciated in a lyric by Menander the Rhetor. Together with the fact that at least one of Julian's ideas about the Phoenicians (the "Semele Pericope") came from an oracle, this suggests to me that the Solar Pericope may be an extract from a poetic composition, and that Julian read it either in its original form or as preserved within another work.

Finally, but most significantly of all, when I come to Damaskios' use of Eudemos and Mochos, one finds Phoenician authority given for complementary ideas, which, because in Mochos they refer to a deity named "Oulamos" (Phoenician *ʿlm*, the eternal), form a link between these sophisticated ideas and the concept of the "eternal sun", *šmš ʿlm*, found in first millennium Phoenicia, and its apparent correlate in ancient Ugarit.

CHAPTER 3
THE REMAINING PHOENICIAN PERICOPES

THE APHRODITE PERICOPE

The Aphrodite Pericope is integrally related to the Solar Pericope. The light of the sun brings to perfection both the forms and the being (αἱ δὲ τελειότητες εἴδη τέ εἰσι καὶ οὐσία) of all created things.[1] Helios works this creative and sustaining role not entirely directly, but using the "noetic" (intelligible) gods.[2] This entire scheme, we are reminded, is effected through the "forethought" or "providence" (προμήθεια) of Helios.[3] Julian then relates these ideas to classical mythology, especially as found in Homer and Hesiod.[4] This mythology, in its turn, is considered with reference to philosophical ideas, especially at 138A-B with its reference to Aristotle.[5] This reveals that Helios is both the "head" (ἡγεμών) and the "middle" or "mean" (μεσότης) of the noetic gods.[6] But Julian is emphatic that by "middle" he does not mean the spatial center between two extremes located on either side of this center; rather, he means the *harmonizing* element, the element which is related to all other parts and orders them.[7] The sun is central because it integrates and directs. In this respect, Helios provides the noetic gods of the middle realm with their "goodworking and perfect nature" (ἀγαθοεργὸν καὶ τελειὰν αὑτοῖς διδοὺς τὴν οὐσίαν), and allows them both to think and to be thought of.[8]

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[1] *Hymn to King Helios* citing 134D, but see also 140B and 141A.

[2] *Hymn to King Helios* 134B, 135A-C.

[3] *Hymn to King Helios* 135A-B.

[4] *Hymn to King Helios* 135C-137C.

[5] As we shall see when we come to deal with the Semele Pericope, the distinction between philosophy and mythology is not anachronistic in Julian: he himself acknowledges the difference.

[6] *Hymn to King Helios* 138C.

[7] *Hymn to King Helios* 138D-139C.

[8] *Hymn to King Helios* 144D-145B. Although this last point, at 145B, pertains to the noetic realms, it is nonetheless analogous to the way that

Julian then introduces two goddesses, Athena and Aphrodite. The gods and goddesses comprise an army (στρατία) which Helios has placed under *Athena Pronoia*, Athena of Forethought.[9] This goddess has several functions, not the least of which is to fill the spheres of heaven with "purpose" (φρόνησις), and bestow upon humanity "wisdom" (σοφία), "thought" (νοεῖν), and the arts (τὰς δημιουργικὰς τέχνας).[10] This, then, is the context of the Aphrodite Pericope, which immediately follows. The terms of this passage were set out in chapter 1. There are, however, several further points to note.

First, the teaching is specifically stated to be that of οἱ λόγιοι, "the erudite", among the Phoenicians. This is important, as it confirms what one would have expected (and is entirely consistent with all of the evidence), that in the view of a philosopher of at least reasonable attainment, there existed among the Phoenicians an elite group who were capable of theology.

Secondly, Julian refers to the deity as "Aphrodite", a deity bearing a Greek, and not a Phoenician name. Deities of other cultures were often given Greek names, a common phenomenon referred to as the *interpretatio graeca*. Writers often referred to the fact that one deity would have many names. About this goddess, Philo of Byblos is quite concise and unequivocal: "The Phoenicians say that Astarte is Aphrodite" (τὴν δὲ Ἀστάρτην Φοίνικες τὴν Ἀφροδίτην εἶναι λέγουσιν).[11] However, there is other evidence. In classical Byblos there existed a cult which was known to speakers and readers of Greek as a cult of Adonis and Aphrodite.[12] In connection with his studies of Lucian, who knew of the Byblos cult, R. A. Oden, Jr. has presented an overwhelming case for understanding the Phoenician goddess Astarte (there are variations of the spelling) to be the goddess who was known as Aphrodite.[13]

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the sun allows us to see and be seen. Julian thus works out his "sun" analogy rather fully.

[9] *Hymn to King Helios* 149A-C.

[10] *Hymn to King Helios* 149D-150A.

[11] Philo set out in Attridge and Oden (1981), pp. 54 and 55. Katzenstein (1997) accepts the identification: p. 149, n. 104.

[12] Ribichini (1988) p. 126. In Byblos the goddess may have been most frequently addressed as *bʿlt gbl*, "Baalat Gebal", "Lady of Byblos".

[13] Oden (1987) pp. 80 and 103. Oden notes that Astarte could also be known as Hera, because of her central position in the pantheon.

This is not to assert that in the world of ancient polytheism, Astarte did not influence the depiction of, and legends concerning, other Greek deities such as Artemis.[14] But it remains true that in the ancient world Aphrodite was identified with the Phoenician goddess Astarte, and thus Julian's reference to a Phoenician opinion involving Aphrodite can, without contrivance, be read as referring to ideas which would have originally referred to Astarte.

For the sake of completeness it should be mentioned that, in the *interpretatio graeca* (and also the *interpretatio romana*), a Phoenician deity could represent one Greek deity, or even several others (I deal with this more fully below). However, while there is evidence that Astarte could also be considered as Hera, the interchangeability does not seem to have been reciprocal: Aphrodite seems always to have been Astarte.[15]

Thirdly, in the Solar Pericope, Julian has spoken only of Phoenician ideas as they relate to the *rays* of the sun. Julian implies that the Phoenicians gave Helios, the sun itself, the central role in the creation. When one considers what has been written in the Solar and the Aphrodite Pericopes, it follows that Helios' role in the process in which Aphrodite takes part must be critical in the generation and formation of life. Even if Julian had not made this clear here, one could reasonably have inferred that it was so, for to emanate "pure mind" throughout the atmosphere is tantamount to providing all thinking creatures with their intelligence.

Julian's further comments concerning Aphrodite (e.g., that she represents a *blending* of the gods of the sky) are not original to him, but must be drawn from Phoenicia, for at 150C Julian states that he wishes that he could provide more of the "theology" (θεολογία) of the Phoenicians. In this passage, over and above the remarks I quoted at the start of this chapter, Julian states that Aphrodite is "near" (ἐγγύς) to Helios. Wright is surely correct in seeing this as a reference to Aphrodite as the planet Venus.[16] There is a theory that Astarte's name was, in its masculine form, originally the name of

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[14] Wyatt (1995) p. 208.

[15] *DCPP* pp. 34 ("Aphrodite"), 47-48 ("Astarte") and 230 ("Interpretatio").

[16] (1913) vol. I, p. 411, n. 3. To like effect, Drijvers (1980) pp. 146-147. This is expanded further below when, in connection with the Edessa Pericope, I deal with the Semitic deities Aziz and Munim (Azizos and Monimos).

that planet.[17] This would accord with the well known links between the goddess Ištar and Venus, and between Ištar and Astarte.[18]

I should pause here to note that the link between Astarte and fertility is known from various pieces of evidence.[19] Among the more interesting are the figurines from the Levant, assuming, of course, that the general opinion that they are figurines of Astarte is correct. However, the identification of this goddess as a deity of fecundity does not rest upon these figurines.[20] Further, it is hardly surprising that a goddess with a strong fertility aspect could, in the hands of theologians, acquire the type of functions which Julian ascribes to her.

Aphrodite is described by Julian as θέλγουσα, "always touching with magic power", or simply "always charming",[21] by sending down to us, from the aither, the sweetest and "most unmixed" (ἀκήρατος) sunbeams.[22] It is precisely at this point that Julian states he wishes he could provide more of the Phoenician theology. Note that this pericope ends with the reference to *pure* rays of the sun, just as in the Solar Pericope.

This congruence strongly suggests that Julian had available to him a source which attributed to the Phoenicians a philosophy in which undefiled beams of the sun played a major role in the creation and sustenance of the universe, and further, that these ideas were incorporated into an overall design of polytheistic symbolism. It is true to what is known of Phoenician religion that both a male deity and a female one would be conjoined.[23] Again, Julian's language is suggestive of poetry, and there is an insistence on the purity of the beams. As sunbeams are not really open to impurity, except when shining through clouds or other particles suspended in the atmosphere, this strengthens the notion that there

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[17] Wyatt (1995) p. 204.

[18] Barnett (1975) pp. 149-150; the literature on Ištar and the morning star is vast, but see for a concise summary with references, Drijvers (1980) pp. 151-152. See also *DCPP* pp. 47-48.

[19] *DCPP* p. 48.

[20] Pinnock (1995) p. 2523 and more generally, Wyatt (1995) p. 211.

[21] I use the word "always" to try and render some of the force of the present participle.

[22] *Hymn to King Helios* 150C.

[23] This is a large topic: for a summary see Bonnet and Xella (1995) *passim.*

is a significance in these repeated references. The idea of a mediator or partner will also find a correlation in Damaskios.

THE EDESSA PERICOPE

The full text of this pericope was set out in the previous chapter. However, some of it must be repeated for the purpose of understanding a crucial proposed amendment.

In order to understand the sense of this pericope, and also to grasp a critical point of textual "correction", one needs to consider briefly a related passage from the same oration, at 154A-B. At this point of the *Hymn*, Julian is arguing that Helios was in fact the founder of Rome. There is, Julian declares, a good deal of evidence for this, but he intends to propound only the following: Aeneas is known to be the son of Aphrodite (this is true to the *interpretatio graeca*; in the Latin tradition, exemplified in Vergil: Aeneas is the son of Venus, the Roman equivalent of Aphrodite). That goddess is ὑπουργὸς Ἡλίῳ καὶ συγγενής ("assistant [lit. "a serviceable one"] and kin") to Helios. Now the founder of Rome was said to be the son of Ares. Julian then states:

> ἐγὼ δὲ ὅτι μὲν Ἄρης Ἄζιζος λεγόμενος ὑπὸ τῶν οἰκούντων τὴν Ἔμεσαν Σύρων Ἡλίου προπομπεύει …[24]
>
> I (am aware) that Ares is called Azizos by the Syrians who dwell in Emesa, and that he goes ahead in procession before Helios …

As adumbrated, an important question arises concerning the text: the unanimous manuscript tradition—before modern amendment—in fact reads "Edessa" in both instances where the town of "Emesa" is found in Wright's text and translation.[25] In his bibliography, Wright states that his edition is a revised recension of Hertlein's of 1875-6. He also cites the earlier edition of Spanheim, published in 1696. In both of the amendments referred to above, his note indicates that he is following Spanheim. In the second instance, he indicates that Hertlein has retained the original reading of Edessa.[26] Hajjar suggests that no reason for the amendment has

[24] *Hymn to King Helios* 154A-B.

[25] The manuscript uses the accusative case: Wright (1913) I, pp. 412 n. 2 and 422 n. 1.

[26] Wright (1913) I, p. 422 n. 1.

ever been offered and that, as none is apparent, "Edessa" is to be preferred.[27] However, this is not entirely fair to those favoring the amendment.[28] The reason proffered for the amendment is that Julian here refers to a city long devoted to the sun, and this description does not suit Edessa, but is very apt for Emesa (the modern Homs, in the southern Orontes valley).[29]

As scholars are bound to concede, the association of Emesa and the sun was indeed an ancient and venerable one.[30] Further, Emesa was an extremely important city for much of the Roman Empire, having been associated with several emperors, and being fabulously wealthy as a result of its trade.[31] But this argument would be conclusive only if we knew that Julian was cognizant of all of this. It is by no means impossible that his source for the Edessa Pericope made the said claim, and that Julian accepted it. Indeed, our own knowledge of the cults of the Roman Empire is not exhaustive. Certainly, not much is known of the history of the solar cult which did indubitably exist at Edessa. While Edessa did have an established solar cult, there is no evidence as to which cult held the preeminent place there. I must concede that I have not read any evidence which would attribute to Edessa a solar cult with anything like the distinction and reputation of that at Emesa. But Julian is not saying that the town in question was the most distinguished center of the sun, or that the inhabitants were monolatrous in favor of the sun.

Edessa is found on the Mesopotamian plains, near the Anatolian foothills.[32] Its antiquity was the subject of much speculation, even in what we consider ancient times.

So far as we can tell, it was chiefly known for the worship of the planets, but where the planets are revered, the sun around which they revolve is unlikely to be disregarded. It is known that:

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[27] Hajjar (1990) p. 2576 n. 461. To like effect with other arguments and notes is Drijvers (1980) pp. 147-150. The further nine pages to p. 159 strengthen Drijvers' argument against the emendation.

[28] R Smith (1995) p. 157 offers no reason for accepting "Emesa".

[29] Wright (1913a) p. 413, n.1. The fullest treatment is that of Drijvers (1980) pp. 147-150.

[30] Drijvers (1980) pp. 147-150.

[31] Ball (2000) pp. 33-34.

[32] Ball (2000) p. 87.

(a) one of its gates was known as "Beth Šemeš" (doubtless taking its name from the Beth Šemeš, the temple of the sun);

(b) at least some of Edessa's temples faced eastwards;[33]

(c) later Syriac texts have it that at Edessa there was found worship of celestial deities including the sun, for example, the so-called *Doctrina Addai* and the acts of certain martyrs of whom the Edessenes demanded that they "do obeisance" to the sun;[34] and

(d) there is evidence for the worship of the solar deity *Nḥy* at Edessa.[35]

Just as importantly, the cult of Azizos and Monimos was also known at Edessa, as it was at other places in the area, including Dura Europus and Hauran.[36]

The city of Edessa therefore appears to fit the description given by Julian, which may have been, in any event, stylistically exaggerated, or may even have represented Julian's genuine but mistaken belief. The best conclusion is, I submit, that amendment to "Emesa" is not necessary. I would add to this only that *methodologically*, one needs a reason to make an amendment. Julian knew something of affairs in Edessa, as is evidenced by his letter to Hekebolios.[37] It is accordingly most unlikely that he would have confused it with Emesa. Further, an onus lies upon the party proposing amendment of a unanimous manuscript tradition which can be accepted with equanimity.

However, that may be, the Edessa Pericope seems to add nothing to Julian's argument. Having discoursed on Aphrodite, he mentions Iamblichos, Monimos, and Azizos, and then moves on, saying at 150D that these arrangements and acts of creation are

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[33] Segal (1970) pp. 50-53.

[34] Drijvers (1980) pp. 153 and 156. At p. 158 Drijvers concludes that: "… the historical reliability of the *Doctrina Addai* in matters of pagan religious history is much greater than is usually assumed …"

[35] Drijvers (1980) pp. 153-154.

[36] Frey (1989) p. 55. There, Frey also reads the passage in Julian as referring to Edessa, in accordance with the manuscript, and does not even mention that many have amended that text.

[37] Letter 40 in Wright (1923).

Helios' works in the sphere of heaven (Τὰ μὲν οὖν περὶ τὸν οὐρανὸν ἔργα τοῦ θεοῦ τοιαῦτά ἐστι). Here, at 150C, Julian has said that the reader will see whether his use of the Phoenician theology has been a vain aid to his argument (λόγος). It would appear that this passage illustrates a tendency in Julian to indicate that pagan Hellenistic philosophy and theology are rich, while being obliged by sundry considerations to press on without illustrating this as he would wish. Such expressions of regret have a twofold effect: they apologize for, and disarm any critic of, any deficiencies in his account. They also serve, as here, to gently point the interested reader in the direction of other resources for study. In this instance, Julian refers the reader to Iamblichos and what Julian refers to as the Phoenician theology.[38] There is a certain protreptic intention in this passage.

Julian's meaning is clear even if his argument is weak. He argues that Helios is closely associated with all of the major gods, and so particularly connected with Hermes and Ares that one can practically substitute "Helios" for these gods. Julian then goes on to say that given the role of these deities in the history of Rome, and especially Ares' role in its founding, one can say that Helios founded Rome.

There is one final matter to clarify concerning the meaning of this pericope. The phrase περί with the accusative of the word for earth (γῆ) or the sky/heaven (οὐρανός) and with or without the term τόπος ("place") is, in Julian at least, a means of referring to the cosmic location of the earth and the sky, that is, to the planet earth and to the heavens in which the sun and planets are fixed. These references are clearly meant to be understood as including the role of the earth and heaven in the universal ecology. Thus at 137C he speaks of Ὁ περὶ γὴν τόπος ἐν τῷ γένεσθαι τὸ εἶναι ἔχει, "The place round about the earth holds being which is in the

[38] At 131D to 132B Julian has stated that his self-appointed task is impossible, but that he will essay it with the gods' assistance. As other instances of Julian's penchant for the stylistic mannerism of referring to further arguments and material he could provide, one could point, *inter alia*, to 130C, 144C and especially 142B-C where he adds a very interesting refinement. To paraphrase Julian, because divine matters are causes, and, indeed, potent causes, even what can be said about them multiplies when they are evoked in this material sphere.

(process of) becoming". I cited this clause in dealing with the Solar Pericope.

Having ascertained the meaning of the Edessa Pericope, two questions arise: is the material here accurate, and what does this practice at Edessa have to do with the Phoenicians? In a thorough study, Drijvers concluded that the identification of Azizos and Monimos (the Greek forms of the names Aziz and Monim) with Ares and Hermes respectively is, indeed, correct.[39] Drijvers observes that their Palmyrene epithets of the "good and rewarding gods" are "paraphrased by Iamblichos in the statement that they are 'the channel for many blessings to the region of our earth'…. Iamblichos' identification is the fruit of his correct understanding of the nature of Azizos".[40] As personifications of the Morning and Evening Star, these deities are closely associated with the sun. As Julian says, Azizos will—literally—precede Helios.[41]

However, there is only the most general evidence with which to test the accuracy of the Phoenician connection. The deities Azizos and Monimos represent the Morning and Evening Stars. In the Semitic religion current throughout the area from most ancient times through to and including the Roman age until displaced by Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, the Morning and Evening Stars were the escorts of the sun. Drijvers states:

> Among all groups of Semites there existed, from the third millennium BC onwards, Venus star deities who were partly male and partly female. Their names (Aṯtar, Ištar, et al.) all derive from a common root. … The two hypostases of an originally male Venus star occur in the Palmyrene pantheon as Azizu and Arṣu, and in the Northern region of the Syrian desert as Azizos and Monimos. These pairs have an analogon in the Ugaritic deities Šaḥr and Šalim, so that they may go back to an earlier period and, in fact, may belong to a religious stratum common to all Semites.[42]

It has recently been established that, despite some modern attempts to over-emphasize the importance of its Hellenistic culture, Edessa was basically a Semitic city, not only in population

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[39] Drijvers (1980) pp. 146-174 *passim.*
[40] Drijvers (1980) p. 163.
[41] Drijvers (1980) pp. 168-169.
[42] Drijvers (1980) pp. 151-152. The vocalisations are Drijvers'.

but in its religious and broader culture.[43] Ball has identified distinct elements of religious culture such as the single monumental columns which are spread throughout our region, linking Edessa and places in the Beqa Valley and Baalbek, and eventually spreading to Rome and throughout Europe.[44]

Whether these deities had a major cult in Phoenicia is not now known. But Julian (and, perhaps, Iamblichos) could quite simply have said that this particular notion about Helios, Azizos, and Monimos was Edessene *simpliciter*. Julian did not need to designate it as Phoenician. Edessa would still have been an ancient place, sacred to the sun, even without the connection to Phoenicia. The reference to Phoenicia is unlikely to be accidental.

The fact that Julian uses this Phoenician theology only in his oration upon King Helios suggests that the Phoenician theology was a solar one, or at least had no relevance in his *Hymn to the Mother of the Gods*. In any event, Julian's text can stand, and is not in need of the emendation which some scholars have suggested.

THE SEMELE PERICOPE

Julian wrote the Seventh Oration, *To the Cynic Herakleios*, at Constantinople, as a reply to the speaker of that name, probably in the spring of 362.[45] This man had offended Julian with his perceived blasphemies.[46] As it was a public speech, Julian felt bound to observe the rules of etiquette, and hear the talk out. However, in this document, Julian ventures to address the people in writing, for what he states to be the first time.[47]

The chief issue in this oration is perhaps whether philosophy needs the writing of myths (εἴ τι ἄρα καὶ φιλοσοφία προσδεῖται τῆς μυθογραφίας).[48] Julian's concept of mythology was not an untutored one, and in the course of his oration, he rehabilitates mythology, so to speak. Like a good philosopher, he starts by trying to understand the origin of mythology. This, Julian observes, is not easy: it is like trying to discover who first sneezed, or which

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[43] Ball (2000) pp. 87-92 and n. 238.
[44] Ball (2000) pp. 287-289.
[45] Smith (1995) pp. 49-50.
[46] *To Herakleios the Cynic* 204D.
[47] *To Herakleios the Cynic* 205B.
[48] *To Herakleios the Cynic* 205B.

horse first neighed.[49] Julian attempts to unravel this perplexing problem by considering first how human arts arise in general. He then asks where mythology is presently most popular; and ingeniously concludes that mythology probably began amongst herdsmen.[50] A still deeper insight, however, shows us that the human soul (ψυχή) is comprised of reason and knowledge (λόγος and ἐπιστήμη) imprisoned in a body. Thus, human beings are, by their very nature, inclined to learning.

This is consistent with the account of mythology given in the *Hymn to the Mother of the Gods*.[51] There Julian states that myths are the paradoxical forms which the ancients gave to their conclusions when they tried to establish how things originated. Sometimes these researches were conducted under divine guidance. The very paradox of these tales is the "X" which marks the spot, as it were, inviting us to search for their true significance.[52] In his *Kronia*, Julian distinguishes the "old" myths of Aisop from the one which he relates there, and which he refers to as an "image from Hermes" (πλάσμα … Ἑρμοῦ).[53] There, he explicitly treats the myth as an enigma, and states that it is for the listener to decide whether it is true, or a "mixing" (μῖχις) or combination. However, it is clear from this extended parable on Roman history (especially the treatment of Constantine and Jesus, and the reverent treatment of Mithra) that it is intended to be taken as truthful in the sense of disclosing a perspective on history and thus the contemporary world, which accords with their nature.[54]

This then, is Julian's refined understanding of mythology: it is an approach to learning, in accord with our fundamental natures. Julian qualifies this by saying that it originated with the wise, who fashioned it to help those "with the souls of children".[55] The ideas

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[49] *To Herakleios the Cynic* 205C.

[50] *To Herakleios the Cynic* 205D-206A.

[51] It might be noted that the orations are not numbered in chronological order. I am not certain that there is any order in the numbering at all.

[52] Oration V, *Hymn to the Mother of the Gods* 169D-170C. In his satirical *Kronia* (the Greek form of the Latin *Saturnalia*), Julian has a character remark that Plato could write seriously while using myths (306C).

[53] *Kronia* 307A.

[54] See *Kronia* 335D-336B. The reference to truth and μῖχις is at 307A.

[55] *Hymn to the Mother of the Gods* 206C-D.

developed in *Hymn to the Mother of the Gods* tend to suggest that Julian's method of exegesis, rather than being intended to subvert the myths, was seen as fulfilling the original intention of the mythologists.

In this ingenious manner, Julian can—as he wills—either disown a myth, or embrace it. According to this scheme, mythology is explained, interpreted, or marginalized, for the principle has been established that there is deep wisdom in some, if not most, of the myths. For Julian, some of the greatest philosophers and theologians of all ages—sages such as Orpheus—made use of mythology. Their wisdom has been preserved in these legends, and it is precisely the *anomalies* in the myths which prepare the way for us to receive their truth.[56] Julian thus reverses Herakleios' argument, and turns it back against him: it is the parts of the myths which one would mock which hide the treasure, so to speak.[57]

This method of interpreting myths as intentional allegories was quite ancient, and predates Plato. This is an important point. Kingsley contends that:

> … habits die hard, and in spite of the evidence of the Derveni papyrus it is still normal to find the allegorizing of Orphic poetry and mythology presented as a primarily Neoplatonic phenomenon. Here, however, we have the allegorizing interpretation of Orphic literature not only attested before Plato's time, but actually feeding into and creating the Platonic myths themselves.[58]

That is, some of these legends may in fact have been created with the intention of being interpreted in the manner of Julian's exegesis. If this is so, it helps to establish that we are dealing with an ancient and consistent tradition of scholarship: these are not the untrustworthy works of people with no discipline or method.

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[56] *Hymn to the Mother of the Gods* 215B-217C.

[57] This argument was known in the ancient world, and in particular, in Neoplatonist thought. One finds it in Macrobius' *Commentary on the Dream of Scipio* (2.17) and in Salustius *Concerning the Gods and the Universe.* Note Fowden (1979) p. 238 on the parallels between the ideas of Salustius and Julian.

[58] Kingsley (1995) p. 126. See also n. 48 on that page where Kingsley deals with the notion that allegorical traditions must be late.

Further, this can serve as another warning against imputing everything philosophical and allegorical to Neoplatonic influence.

It is in this context that one can appreciate the Semele Pericope. Julian announces his intention of speaking about Dionysos, but he is aware that there are certain things about which it is not proper to speak openly, and further, whatever one says about the gods must be said in a decorous fashion.[59] Julian narrates the myth of Dionysos' birth, and then at 220D abruptly sets out the Semele Pericope. The text of this pericope was included in chapter 1, but it will be recalled that Julian cites this line: Πολλὰς καὶ Φοίνικες ὁδοὺς μακάρων ἐδάησαν, "Many are the ways of the blessed (gods) the Phoenicians have learnt". [60]

The god's testimony to the learning of the Phoenicians is a reference to an oracle. Though Wright refers to it as "An oracular verse from an unknown source",[61] it is in fact to be found in book 9 of Eusebius' *Praeparatio Evangelica*. This work is a sprawling apology for Christianity, featuring a sustained attack upon paganism, and dealing with the antiquity of the Hebrews. Again, the book demonstrates the normative power of the past in the late antique world, hence the partiality of polemicists to historical attacks together with other strategies. Eusebius draws upon a work of Porphyry, now lost in its entirety, called Ἐκ λογίων φιλοσόφιας—*Philosophy from Oracles*. The oracle reads:

> αἰπεινὴ μὲν ὁδὸς μακάρων τρηχεῖά τε πολλόν,
> χαλκοδέτοις τὰ πρῶτα διοιγομένη πυλεῶσιν·
> ἀτραπιτοὶ δὲ ἔασιν ἀθέσφατοι ἐγγεγαυῖαι,
> ἃς πρῶτοι μερόπων ἐπ᾽ ἀπείρονα πρῆξιν ἔφησαν
> οἱ τὸ καλὸν πίνοντες ὕδωρ Νειλώτιδος αἴης
> πολλὰς καὶ Φοίνικες ὁδοὺς μακάρων ἐδάησαν
> Ἀσσύριοι Λυδοί τε καὶ Ἑβραίων γένος ἀνδρῶν[62]

> Steep the path of the blessed and hard indeed,
> *By brass bound gates the first things are opened*
> Beyond words are the winding paths: it happens
> that the first of men[63] to bring to light the boundless action,[64]

[59] *To Herakleios the Cynic* 218A-219A.

[60] See n. 14, p. 11, on the translation

[61] So Wright (1913), vol. II, p. 113, n.4.

[62] Eusebius, *Praeparatio Evangelica* 9.10.2. Found in Eusebius (1991) pp. 216-219.

were those who drink the good water of the land of the Nile.
Many are the ways of the blessed (gods) the Phoenicians have learnt.
The Assyrians, Lydians and the Hebrew race of men.[65]

It might be observed that although Iamblichos and Porphyry had certain differences, especially over the question of theurgy,[66] Julian shows respect for Porphyry. For example, in his oration *To Herakleios the Cynic*, he speaks of the need to understand certain words in a symbolic sense, and he describes this interpretation as being that of Plato, Plotinos, Porphyry, and the inspired Iamblichos.[67] In Julian's world, this is select company indeed.[68]

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[63] Literally: "those endowed with speech", which by metonymy means "men, humans".

[64] The translation of this oracle, with its archaic usages, but especially these two complex lines is not straightforward. Fortunately, the line in which the Phoenicians feature is tolerably clear. The translation by Des Places reads: "il y a là des sentiers immenses qu'on fait voir, pour d'innombrables rites …", Eusebius (1991) p. 217. Des Places seems to take πρᾶξις as "rites", a reading which—in this context—is almost certainly correct. Taylor takes it as "actions", the more basic sense, (1821) p. 296. The fragments of *Philosophia ex oraculis* are collected in Porphyry (1962). This poem appears in a passage set out at pp. 139-141.

[65] Taylor (1821) p. 296 amends "Hebrews" to read "Chaldaeans" but does not state his reason, except to say that emendation of the sort had been known to take place, and Eusebius would not have been above such a substitution. However, while this last line is certainly odd, with its reference to the "Hebrew race of men", emendation is at large, as we have no means of knowing what the original could have been. The reading "Hebrew" is not at all impossible or even unlikely. Boys-Stones (2001) p. 113 n. 28 is of the opinion that "Porphyry's inclusion of the Hebrews in his list of ancient nations was not wholly idiosyncratic …". Wolff accepts "Hebrews" without demur in his edition, Porphyry (1962) p. 140 n. 11. I support the manuscript reading: the case for amendment has not been made out. To be fair to Taylor, the point was considered odd in antiquity, and Theodoret added a gloss to the effect that the "Assyrians" of the oracle were the Chaldaeans: Wolff in Porphyry (1962) p. 141 and n. 6.

[66] This difference of opinion was the occasion of Porphyry's letter, and Iamblichos' reply, both of which are found in Iamblichos' *Concerning the Mysteries.*

[67] 222B.

[68] There is a discussion of this reference by Julian in the context of a review of Porphyry's *Philosophy from Oracles* in Bidez (1964) 17-28. I have

Julian goes on to interpret Semele as a prophetess, who was the first of the Hellenes to realize that there was shortly to be an ἐπιφάνεια, a visible manifestation, of Dionysos.[69] The balance of Julian's "demythologization" narrative is not important. But it is important to amplify a matter which Julian's audience would have understood in a manner which we do not. Kadmos was a well-known figure, and almost a culture-hero, in Greek tradition. While there is a certain amount of variation in the legends associated with Kadmos, it is also significant that there is an unvarying core.[70] It was Kadmos who went in search of his near relation Europa, the Phoenician maiden seduced by Zeus in the form of a white bull.[71] Kadmos travelled from a foreign port (usually said to be either Tyre or Sidon), and in Delphi was guided by the oracle of Apollo to the founding of Thebes in Greece.

As king of Thebes, Kadmos married Harmonia, the daughter of Ares and Athena. There are many other legends about him, but for our purposes the most critical are those which associate him with the origin of the alphabet, with the founding of cults, temples, and altars, and with the invention of gold-mining in Thrace, bronze-working at Thebes, stone-working in various places, the aqueduct and even—in one account—reinstatement of the lyre to Greece.[72] Herodotos 5.58 is often cited as authority for some of these propositions, and, indeed, it is correct to do so. But the entire passage through to 5.60 is of interest and shows that Herodotos has personally conducted research into the development of the

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not quoted this work as it seems, to me, to be chiefly a collection of information with some basic annotations. In any event, Bidez simply does not take Porphyry seriously, and his style is often flippant. Reale (1990) p. 406 cites Bidez as a quotable example of the former devaluation of Porphyry, and goes on to observe that this characterization is not sustainable.

[69] *To Herakleios the Cynic* 221A-C.

[70] Edwards (1979) p. 50.

[71] It is recognized now that the names "Kadmos" and "Europa" come from the Phoenician words for "east" and "west" respectively: Burkert (1992) p. 2.

[72] Edwards (1979) pp. 19-32. Edwards slightly mis-states the tradition in Nicomachus of Gerasa. He does not say that Kadmos invented the lyre (as she seems to take it), but that Hermes did. After the Greeks had lost knowledge of it, Kadmos (by a fortunate accident) was able to reinstate it in Greece: Nicomachos cited in Levin (1994) p. 189.

Greek alphabet. The material marshaled by Herodotos demonstrates that traditions concerning the central role of the Phoenicians and Kadmos in the development of the Greek alphabet were widespread, even if there was disagreement about precisely what happened and through whose agency.[73]

While the Semele Pericope does not give us any more information about Phoenician theology, it is important, if only because it provides some context for the other pericopes. The Phoenicians must have come to enjoy a lofty status as theologians, or at least as religious thinkers, for Julian to have appealed to them at this point of the oration, where he was attempting to establish the depth of the ideas conveyed in classical mythology. It would have undercut his own arguments to commend as authorities sources of no credibility or weight.

It is worth noting that Alexander of Abonoteichos used the prestige of the Phoenicians and Hebrews in his career. Lucian, to whom we shall return below, says of Alexander that he had a following throughout the entirety of the Roman Empire. When he took his place he would utter some words which sounded like Hebrew or Phoenician, which the people could not follow, except that they referred to Apollo and Asklepios,[74] the sun deity and his son, to whom we shall return later.[75] The implication of the passage is that the people were impressed that he should be inspired to speak in these languages.

Therefore, the Semele Pericope supports the view that Julian genuinely held the Phoenicians in high regard as thinkers. Neither did Julian think it necessary to expend a great deal of effort in persuading his audience to take the same view. Rather, he seems to have assumed their sympathy with his assessment of the Phoenicians. Furthermore, by appealing to Semele's Phoenician ancestry, and in particular to her father, Kadmos, Julian is invoking and referring to a tradition of Hellenic receptivity to Phoenician influences. That they appeared in the Greek oracle which Porphyry cited is further testimony to the fact that they had some measure of prestige in the late antique world.

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[73] Garbini (1988) p. 101 notes some variant traditions, though one must commence with Herodotos.

[74] Lucian (1925) *Alexander the False Prophet* 2 and 13.

[75] I return to this passage from Lucian later, when we come to discuss the survival of Phoenician into late antiquity.

Note, too, Julian's precise words in the Solar Pericope asserting that the Phoenicians are σοφῶν τὰ θεῖα καὶ επιστημόνων, "wise and understanding in respect of divine matters". This is almost exactly paralleled in this pericope, where he describes Semele as σοφὴ τὰ θεῖα, "wise in respect of divine matters". While this may be a manner of speech, it is significant that Julian uses the same wording when speaking of the Phoenicians. It may be that this phrase itself was taken from some other oracle or poem, for the diction strikes me as being poetic. This, in turn, would imply that there was other material in the tradition available to Julian, now lost, which supported his exalted view of the Phoenicians. I suggest that Julian's high regard for the Phoenicians can be taken as safely established.

The fact that the Semele Pericope uses an oracle (which was available in Porphyry, but may have been known to Julian from another source) and the discussion so far, thus demonstrate three things, one positive and two negative. The positive is that Julian has more than one source for the Phoenicians. From this one can infer that the Solar Pericope itself is not necessarily taken from Iamblichos. The two negatives are, first, that as Julian does not give the source of the Solar Pericope, we do not know what that source is, although I suspect that it is a poem of some type, perhaps a cosmogony or a hymn. The second negative is that it is now demonstrated that Julian's esteem for the Phoenician theologians was not solely based upon, and supported by, his appreciation of Iamblichos. That is, Julian's regard for the Phoenicians was not dependent upon and subordinate to the authority of Iamblichos.

When, in chapter 4, I examine the other sources for Julian's *Hymn to King Helios*, it will, I suggest, be established that Julian's "Phoenician *theologia*" and the use which he makes of it, are not, as a whole, merely a crib from Iamblichos.

THE ARITHMETIC PERICOPE

The Arithmetic Pericope has also been set out in chapter 1. Julian is not speaking of abstract or pure mathematics here, nor is he referring to mathematical sciences such as geometry or trigonometry. The reference is clearly to the use of arithmetic in the course of trading. Equally clearly, Julian is writing of the development of a science over a span of time, for which period he mentions only two points, the commencement and the apogee.

There is no indication as to whether, in Julian's view, any Phoenicians other than their merchants then further developed the science of arithmetic. Importantly, Porphyry (an elder contemporary of Iamblichos) states that the Phoenicians were experts in mathematics, and specifies τὰ δὲ περὶ ἀριθμούς τε καὶ λογισμοὺς: matters concerning numbers and counting.[76]

A search of modern authorities for evidence of Phoenician advances in the mathematics required for trading, or indeed, for any purpose, is bootless. For example, the recent collection of studies by Horyup, which even includes a comparison between mathematics in Old Babylon and in ancient Greece, does not mention the Phoenicians at all.[77] The Phoenician art of arithmetic has disappeared, leaving only indirect traces in their arts and works.

However, the Phoenicians enjoyed a high reputation in Greece for their development of arithmetic, astronomy, and navigation. Strabo, who lived between approximately 64 BCE and 25 CE, wrote in his *Geographika*:[78]

> Σιδόνιοι δὲ πολύτεχνοί τινες παραδέδονται καὶ καλλίτεχνοι, καθάπερ καὶ ὁ ποιητὴς δηλοῖ, πρὸς δὲ καὶ φιλόσοφοι περί τε ἀστρονόμιαν καὶ ἀριθμητικὴν ἀπὸ τῆς λογιστικῆς ἀρξάμενοι καὶ τῆς νυκτιπλοίας, ἐμποικὸν γὰρ καὶ ναυκληρικὸν ἑκάτερον, … τοῦτο μὲν οὖν παρ᾽ Αἰγυπτίων ἥκειν εἰς τοὺς Ἕλληυνας πεπιστεύκασιν, ἀστρονομίαν δὲ καὶ ἀριθμητικὴν παρὰ Φοινίκων· νυνὶ δὲ πάσης καὶ τῆς ἄλλης φιλοσοφίας εὐπορίαν πολὺ πλείστην λαβεῖν ἔστιν ἐκ τούτων τῶν πόλεων …

> Sidonians are skilled in many arts, as some have handed down to us, and have beautiful workmanship, as the poet discloses. Besides, they are philosophers in astronomy and arithmetic, who began from calculations and from night sailing, for each one is (needed for) commerce and seafaring. (Just as the Egyptians invented geometry) and this, from the Egyptians, came to the Greeks, as is believed, (so) astronomy and

[76] Porphyry, *Life of Pythagoras*, 6.

[77] In Horyup's view, the fundamental difference between Old Babylonian and Greek mathematics is that "Old Babylonian mathematics grew out of its *methods*, whereas Greek mathematics grew out of *problems,* to state things briefly". Horyup (1994) p. 7. Horyup is specifically speaking of Old Babylon, i.e., the Babylon of Hammurabi and his dynasty.

[78] Strabo (1930) 16.2.24.

> arithmetic from the Phoenicians. And even now, of all and every philosophy much the greatest faculty (wealth) is for the taking from these cities …

I shall return to Strabo when I come to Mochos in chapter 10. Strabo does not provide us with any further details, however, he is clearly referring to the people we known as Phoenicians, for they are also Sidonians and the people mentioned by Homer.

Thus, while the evidence is by no means extensive, Julian's statement seems to be accurate in what it states of the mutual roles of the Phoenicians and Greeks, but to be inaccurate as a history of mathematics, for the Phoenician merchants certainly did not invent the art of arithmetic.[79] It should also be noted that Julian does not attribute any particular philosophical or occult learning to the Phoenicians in this pericope. His view of the Phoenicians, such as it has come down to us, is not a lopsided one where they appear as privileged theosophical initiates, even though his argument against the Christians would have been aided by the grandest possible claims for other races and peoples. However, it is quite clear (especially given the comments of Porphyry of Tyre) that the Phoenicians with a reputation for arithmetical learning are the people of the Lebanese coast, and that reputation was probably based on fact.

JULIAN'S "PHOENICIANS"

The best evidence for the identity of those whom Julian meant by "Phoenicians" in the Solar Pericope must come from the context of that passage within the *Hymn to King Helios* and within Julian's oeuvre as a whole. As was demonstrated in chapter 2 when we closely considered the terms of the Solar Pericope, Julian saw the Phoenician theology as hailing from a system of philosophy extraneous to the one which he was developing for his readers. This was apparent where he stated, almost defensively, that his own discourse did not "sing out of tune" with the Phoenician. Now Julian's entire treatment seems to be within the tradition of classical, late antique Roman philosophy, as scholars agree, and I have to some small extent repeated their demonstrations. As noted, Bouffartigue believes that Julian was developing a greater fondness

[79] See Dilke (1987) and Ifrah (1998) *passim.*

for the polytheistic peoples of the east, especially the Phoenicians. This is certainly a coherent contention, but it is difficult to say that it has been proved on the rather slim evidence before us.

But whether Bouffartigue is correct or not, his research does oblige us to carefully consider the material, and in doing so it emerges that Julian believed that the Phoenician ideas did not come from his classical environment. In this respect, he was almost certainly correct. The Aphrodite Pericope unfortunately tells us little about the content of Julian's notion of "Phoenicians". The Edessa Pericope tells us that Julian at least considered that interpretations of ritual activities performed in Edessa (as opposed to the rituals themselves) were illustrative of the Phoenician theology.

It is not accidental that at 150C, Julian speaks of "those who dwell at Edessa", οἱ τὴν Ἔδεσσαν οἰκοῦντες, and not simply to "the Phoenicians" *simpliciter* as he does in the other four Phoenician pericopes. This suggests that to Julian, and thus to Iamblichos, it was necessary to qualify the reference to a Phoenician theology by stating that in this instance the example came from Edessa.

If Julian, or perhaps Iamblichos, did not consider that the idea in question was Phoenician, it is hard to see why it should have been attributed to them. The best way to read the Edessene pericope, I suggest, is to see Julian as referring to a people whom he knew were not Phoenician—these people lived at Edessa—but either their theology was Phoenician, or their ritual activities were explicable by the Phoenician theology.

Of all the pericopes, it is the Semele Pericope, with its reference to the lady and her father Kadmos (who were reputed to have come from Tyre, or sometimes, Sidon) which offers the clearest indication of whom Julian meant by the Phoenicians.

This is not to say that Julian's notion of the Phoenicians may not have been wider than has been demonstrated here: it may well be that he believed that people from towns other than Tyre or Sidon could be called Phoenician. It is impossible to test this now because Julian's corpus offers so few references to Phoenicians, and these are not decisive. However, it is clear that however wide the complete class of all those people that Julian conceived to be Phoenician may have been, his ideas embraced—if they did not in fact have as their core—the merchant cities of the coast. Further, he saw the Phoenicians as having a history which stretched back to

the dim past when the major cities of Greece were being founded. The Semele Pericope is evidence of this. This indeed is what one would expect, considering the role that the Phoenicians had in Julian's beloved Homer.

Therefore, one can only conclude that for Julian, however broad the term "Phoenician" may have been, it certainly referred to the people of the Lebanese coast, over a period stretching from the first millennium BCE, when they sail into the pages of Greek literature.

CHAPTER 4
JULIAN AND HIS SOURCES

This chapter and the next provide the full relevant context of the Solar Pericope. They also anticipate and meet objections to my thesis which have not yet been enunciated. This is the first treatment of the Solar Pericope and the general issue of the reliability of Julian's statements about non-Greek cultures, and the Phoenicians in particular. There is a need to anticipate such questions, considering three views which have been current, to a greater or lesser degree, over the last two hundred years or more. These views are that:

(a) the Greeks invented philosophy, and thus, in terms of the ancient world, philosophy is late;

(b) before the invention and spread of Greek philosophy, the Phoenicians would not have been capable of the subtle type of thought evidenced in the Solar Pericope;

(c) Julian was a nondescript thinker, and at least in the *Hymn to King Helios* was basically a cipher for Iamblichos, himself a third rate thinker. Both were miracle-mongers.

In other words, this chapter addresses the tacit and skeptical question: can Julian possibly have had reliable sources for the Solar Pericope? This chapter must therefore proceed by careful stages, because to an extent it is defensive, and so must cover every flank. However, the chapter also has a positive value in that it provides context for an obscure area of intellectual history.

In 1889, Rawlinson expressed the then unexceptional view:

> If the Phoenicians are to be credited with acuteness of intellect, it must be limited to the field of practical enquiry and discovery. Whatever may be said with regard to the extent and variety of their literature … it cannot be pretended that humanity owes to them any important conquests of a scientific or philosophic character.[1]

[1] Rawlinson (1889) pp. 59-60.

One may doubt that any scholar today would venture such an opinion. Xella, who recently set out some similar opinions from the past, also noted that scholars of ancient thought are now less likely to sit in judgment, as cited above. In the same article, Xella furthered what he termed "des directions nouvelles, plus mûres et fécondes",[2] by trying to understand the Phoenicians in terms of their world, and relating that understanding to our modern position and concerns, rather than impatiently looking only for those modes of thought and expression which we would employ today. However, while Xella's clarion sounded a programatic note, there has not, so far as I can tell, been any extended research into the philosophy, mysticism, or spirituality of the Phoenicians. This thesis attempts to remedy that situation, and firmly rejects Rawlinson's assertion.

Historiographic assumptions affect how we write history. Stanford has declared that we need a new understanding of marginalized groups, and that: "… the whole perspective of history must be altered by these changes" (sc. in perspective).[3] The Phoenicians, and even the Israelites, are marginalized in the intellectual history of the ancient world by the ethnocentric view of the Greeks.[4] This is not an eccentric over-reaction. The basis for this call is to be found in the fact, and I suggest that it is now an established fact, that:

> The ancient Greeks were thoroughly "ethnocentric", for they considered their culture superior to that of others and tended to look down upon and despise foreigners.[5]

I shall return to this topic on other occasions later in this thesis. Here, let us briefly consider Rawlinson. In the passage cited, Rawlinson has taken an absence of evidence as being evidence of

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[2] Xella (1986) pp. 29-31, citing p. 31 Van Seters states: "We have good reason to believe that Phoenicia was a highly literate society that produced works of literary merit, but if this was so, then the extant remains are a great disappointment" (1982) p. 208.

[3] Stanford (1998) p. 12.

[4] I refer here to the view that a work of any sophistication must have been influenced by Greece. For example, the biblical book of *Qohelet* is confidently asserted by many to be "deeply" influenced by Greek thought, although the only certain foreign borrowings in it are all from Mesopotamia and Egypt. For a recent overview see Azize (2000).

[5] Coleman (1997) p. 175.

utter and complete absence and even as positive evidence of lack of capacity. This approach has not lasted the test of time. But there is something beyond this: it is in Rawlinson's tone. It is not the role of the historian to sit in judgment on the Phoenicians, or anyone else for that matter, or to purport to speak on behalf of humanity, awarding praise and administering rebukes. In the nineteenth century this sententiousness could perhaps be viewed with equanimity as a part of the art of history. Even then, such an approach had its critics who argued that it belonged rather to the sphere of ethics and morals. While today, few would share Rawlinson's historiographic assumptions (that moralizing belongs in history), more would be inclined to agree with his view of Phoenician (lack of) achievement.

At this point, I am preparing my ground to address the question of a possible Phoenician contribution to philosophy. To show that there is evidence of the type of achievement which Rawlinson has denied for the Phoenicians, I must address the question of Julian's authority for the Solar Pericope, for Julian's statements about the Phoenicians have no more authority than is commanded by his sources.

In *Julian's Gods*, Smith adopted the view that all of the ideas in the *Hymn to King Helios* were attributable to Iamblichos.[6] Even a commentator like Kingsley, following Finamore, states: "Julian was of course to a very large extent a mouthpiece for Iamblichus's ideas".[7] If this is so, and if Iamblichos is not a reliable source for the Phoenicians, one might well conclude that there is no real evidence that the Phoenicians themselves ever expressed the opinions attributed to them by Julian. Any scholar who investigates the Solar Pericope must seriously consider this possibility, as Iamblichos did engage in pseudonymy, and is therefore a questionable source. For example, in the text known today as *Concerning the Mysteries*, Iamblichos replied to Porphyry's critique of theurgy. Porphyry, like Iamblichos a Neoplatonist,[8] had written an epistle for general circulation; phrased as a series of searching questions, it contained a serious attack on the intellectual

[6] Smith (1995) p. 142.

[7] Kingsley (1995) p. 132, n. 62. The presence of an airy "of course" might make one wonder why it is employed.

[8] I do not mean that they belonged to any movement in a formal sense.

underpinnings of theurgy. Iamblichos responded, also in the form of an extended letter, and used the *nom de plume* of an Egyptian priest.[9] It would hardly be wise to use Iamblichos' text uncritically in reconstructing ancient Egyptian religion.[10]

If Iamblichos could attribute his own ideas to an Egyptian priest allegedly articulating an ancient theology, could he not also have credited Phoenicians with his personal theology?[11] This is not the only danger: it is also possible that Julian's "Phoenicians" might really be ciphers for Julian. That is, these "Phoenicians" might be ventriloquist's dummies, as it were. Therefore, it is necessary to understand what Julian's sources were, and how he used them.

Statements made by Roman writers about the distant past require close scrutiny. For Romans, the past was a source of authority. Generally speaking, classical philosophers considered that very ancient doctrines commanded the greater authority, an idea which seems to have entered their tradition through Stoicism. Boys-Stone traces the idea back to the Cynics.[12] The distant past was particularly valued in the Roman tradition of antiquarianism, a tradition exemplified perhaps by Marcus Terrentius Varro (116-27 BCE). He conceived his *Antiquitates rerum divinarum*, "Antiquities of divine matters", as the equivalent of Aeneas' rescue of the Penates from the burning Troy![13] Indeed, in Latin the words *antiquior* and

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[9] I shall deal with these persons and their writings more fully below, when treating of Iamblichos.

[10] Dillon (1987) pp. 870-876, and p. 876 n. 48 is of the view that while one cannot place any of Iamblichos' works in a "definite chronological order", this is a relatively young work. Its true title is *The Reply of the Master Abammon to the Letter of Porphyry to Amebo and the Solutions to the Problems Raised Therein*. It was baptized *De Mysteriis* by Marsilio Ficino. Dillon notes that his own earlier attempts at finding a line of development in Iamblichos' philosophy had to be abandoned because of the paucity of the evidence.

[11] I return to Iamblichos in more detail below, but briefly observe here that while the greater part of *Concerning the Mysteries* is argued by reference to Egyptian wisdom, it is also part of Iamblichos' aim in that text to indicate how the various traditions of the Egyptians, Greeks and non-Greeks (perhaps especially the Assyrians) are inter-related: see especially 7.1, 4 and 5.

[12] Boys-Stones (2001), *passim*. We shall see that this respect for the past was still potent in Lydus.

[13] Tarver (1997) pp. 130-136.

antiquissimus came to mean not only "more antique" and "oldest", but also "more important" and "most important".

Boys-Stone does not follow his argument about respect for the past far beyond Porphyry, but that is sufficient, for Iamblichos was an obvious adherent of this view (or perhaps better, complex of views); and with Iamblichos, we have the last really great *indirect* influence upon Julian, whose preferred teachers of philosophy were all firmly in the Neoplatonist tradition.

In Julian's case, considerable respect is accorded to antique doctrines. At one point he refers to a practice which began in the mid-third century CE, and self-deprecatingly states:

> … ἐρῶ νεώτερα. Βέλτιον δὲ ἴσως ἕν τι τῶν παλαιοτέρων προθεῖναι.
>
> … I will be speaking of newer things. It is probably better to give an example from something more ancient.[14]

I have already referred to a passage in the *Hymn to King Helios*, where Julian states that while astronomy was invented by the Chaldeans and Egyptians, it was perfected by Hipparchos and Ptolemy.[15] This is quite similar in form to what he says in the Arithmetic Pericope of the respective role of the Phoenicians and the Hellenes. It seems that Julian was keenly aware of the greater antiquity of the civilizations which lay to the East, and, being a Hellene at heart, the thought that the Greeks had perfected these sciences allowed him to come to an accommodation with this.[16]

There is another reason to weigh carefully the statements of Neoplatonic philosophers, and particularly Julian, when they cite "Phoenician" and other non-Hellenic doctrines. Julian desired to create a unified paganism to withstand the inroads made by Christianity, and this strengthened the tendency to see all the

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[14] *Hymn to King Helios* 155B. See also a little further on at 155D where the practices of our προπάτορες are held up as especially significant.

[15] *Hymn to King Helios* 156B.

[16] Julian had an august predecessor in this: in the *Epinomis* 986E-987E (a work once attributed to Plato, now thought to be pseudo-Platonic), the writer has his Athenian concede that the Egyptians and Syrians invented astronomy, but only because their skies are so much clearer than those of Greece. However, at 987E he trumps the Easterners by remarking that whatever the Greeks take from them, they (the Greeks) transform into something finer (κάλλιον).

various pantheons as being the one college of gods under different names, and thus to "discover" a common theology. One might even say that the arguments developed in favor of the solar theology of the middle and late Roman Empire confirmed this tendency because the sun did, in fact, have an important role in all of the cultures which were important to these philosophers.[17]

Further, the discernment of a common theology was a trend which had already existed within the classical world. It is not simply a case of the development of a school of comparative mythology, although that had also existed since at least the time of Herodotos. But by at least the time of the Roman Stoic Lucius Annaeus Cornutus (first century CE)—Boys-Stone emphasizes that this view is not attested before Cornutus—the various mythologies were contrasted and compared in order to "reconstruct their common source".[18] A similar sort of approach was taken by Plutarch of Chaironea (45-120 CE) in his *Concerning Isis and Osiris.* Significantly, Porphyry knew of this line of research, and the Platonists tended to believe that Plato himself had perfected it.[19] To Julian, this ancient wisdom was not purely Greek. Thus, in speaking of what he considered the true Cynic doctrine, he avers that even barbarians follow that philosophy, for it is a φιλοσοφία κοινή, a common philosophy.[20]

Despite his respect for the "wisdom" of the ancient past, and for the ethnic mythologies, ultimately, Julian's religion was essentially Hellenic.[21] Although he will say that "Horus" is but one of the many names pertaining to Helios, and refer to the Egyptian

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[17] Equally, perhaps, one could say that the development of the solar theology was facilitated because it suited this harmonizing tendency. They may have reinforced each other.

[18] Boys-Stone (2001) pp. 49 and 56-58.

[19] Boys-Stone (2001) pp. 113-116.

[20] *To the Uneducated Cynics* 187D.

[21] This is the overall thesis, perhaps even the chief thesis, of Athanassiadi-Fowden (1981) *passim.* As noted in chapter 3, Bouffartigue (1992) believes that he can discern a shift in Julian's opinions so that he looks to the East for the spirit and ideas with which to rescue Hellenism. I am not convinced, because Julian subordinates the foreigners to the Hellenes, or as in the Solar Pericope, treats them as extraneous. However, there is a reasonable argument that this serious interest in Eastern ideas was an embryonic tendency, suddenly and sharply halted with Julian's slaying.

calendar, there is no real Egyptian influence in his thought.[22] Athanassiadi-Fowden states of Neoplatonism that: "despite all the oriental influences it underwent, despite all minor compromises, (it) remained Greek in essence …".[23] There has to be a question about what is meant by "Greek in essence", but the evidence does not allow one to blithely affirm the opposite position: that is, that there was no Eastern influence in Neoplatonism. It is also a fact that the contact between the Greeks, Romans, and the East had an influence on the Greeks and thus on Hellenization, so that the nature of Hellenization itself was developing. Levine notes even Alexander and his troops took Persian wives and adopted certain Persian manners; and that "… the East left its mark as well … Hellenization is not merely the impact of Greek culture on a non-Greek world, but rather the interplay of a wide range of cultural forces …".[24]

In the century after Julian, Macrobius developed what was probably the *tour de force* of this trend to harmonize the ancient religions of the Roman Empire into a symphony played in a Hellenic key, as it were. We shall return to Macrobius later, but his *Saturnalia* did aim, *inter alia*, to demonstrate that "all the divinities worshipped in the Greek, Roman and Egyptian religions could be interpreted as being, in reality, the sun god".[25]

It would take me too far from my argument to consider all the variations in detail, but Athanassiadi-Fowden is, in my view, correct to conclude that Julian's close friend Salutius (viz., Sallust) rejected Egyptian theology because he accepted only what was Greek "by origin *or by plausible adoption*" (my emphasis).[26] However, while she makes the same claim about Porphyry and Iamblichos, it seems to me that one might consider a third category: what they could *graft* onto Greek philosophy, for to "adopt" is to attribute a new parentage. Iamblichos was definitely not concerned to Hellenize all of his sources, but as we shall see below, he does seem to have wished to integrate them. In particular, it seems to me that Iamblichos was different from other Neoplatonists in that he was prepared to accept material from outside the Hellenic tradition, and

[22] *Hymn to King Helios* 148D (Horus) and 155AB (the calendar).
[23] Athanassiadi-Fowden (1981) p. 157.
[24] Levine (1998) p. 19.
[25] Gersh (1986) p. 450.
[26] Athanassiadi-Fowden (1981) p. 159.

to address the Neoplatonists from a "barbarian" perspective, as he does in *Concerning the Mysteries.*

Though Julian was more open than Salutius to the influence of Western Asia, he was only marginally so, and apart from the Phoenician Pericopes and the *Chaldaean Oracles*, he simply did not employ ideas from outside the Hellenic and Latin worlds. One cannot even find the extended treatment of Egyptian ideas that is encountered in Plutarch's essay. In fact, there is no evidence that Julian could read anything but Greek and Latin; rather, all the information we have would suggest that he had only these two languages.[27] The survey of Julian's sources below will demonstrate that for him, the religions of the East were mediated through the Greek language.

As noted in the first chapter, religious policy was central to Julian's concerns as emperor. In Athanassiadi-Fowden's view, Julian had two levels in his religious policy, first to defend Greek religion as being a consistent and autonomous whole. The second level was to identify oriental gods and cults with corresponding Hellenistic and Roman gods and cults, so that:

> … when he judged that this process of dogmatic syncretism was complete, the emperor wrote the *Hymn to King Helios* in which he explicitly connected Mithraism with Plato, and raised Helios-Mithra, the god who was the tutelary divinity of his own dynasty, to be the supreme deity of the Roman empire.[28]

Although the general thrust of this is correct, I would demur on two points. First, Julian nowhere "explicitly connected Mithraism with Plato". When this book was reissued as *Julian: An Intellectual Biography*, under the name Athanassiadi (*simpliciter*), the author added a prefatory essay titled "Why A Reprint?", dated September 1991. There she relevantly stated: "I have overemphasized Julian's Mithraism … I may have distorted the balance of Julian's religious belief, by making him lean too heavily on the cult of Mithra".[29] Second, Julian's religious policy was deeper even that this, for he also attempted to make paganism attractive by "competing", as it were with Christianity by raising the

[27] Bouffartigue (1992) p. 500.

[28] Athanassiadi-Fowden (1981) p. 160.

[29] Athanassiadi (1992) p. xiv.

standards of the priesthood and religious ceremonies, and having pagans perform charitable works.[30]

Before pressing on, I should note that I have isolated two arguments in the ancient Neoplatonists: the first of these is one which moves from the antiquity of an idea to its truth, and the second is one which has a tendency to synthesize all religions, preferably by harmonizing them. To an extent, these arguments support one another: not all non-Hellenistic religions were included within this synthesis, but more ancient ones such as the Egyptian, Chaldean, Phoenician, Lydian, and (often) the Hebrew were said to fall under this umbrella. Whether the religions of these peoples really were accepted and harmonized is another matter: I am not aware that any real effort was made to investigate, for example, the religion of the Chaldeans, Phoenicians, and Lydians. These principles could be applied in different ways by different minds, as suited the arguments of the proponent. For example, Tatian the Assyrian, a second century polemicist, in his *Address to the Greeks*, argues that the philosophy of the Christians is superior to that of the Greeks (reading "pagan" for "Greek"). One—and only one—of his arguments is that the Christian philosophy is more ancient than that of the Greeks. However, this is—to his mind—a very telling consideration. In fact, Tatian states that he himself was converted by reading certain barbarian texts, so much older than the Greek that there is no comparison.[31]

In summary, the questions for this chapter are: while Julian attributes the opinions in the five pericopes to the Phoenicians, was he correct to do so? Did Julian have access to reliable sources concerning ancient Phoenicia? Or was Julian in fact dependent upon Iamblichos who, for whatever reason, incorrectly fathered upon the Phoenicians his own philosophy?

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[30] For example, see letters 20, 22, 49, and also 19 and 32 in Wright (1923), and Smith (1995) pp. 110-111.

[31] *Address of Tatian to the Greeks*, 29-31. Interestingly, he excoriates the Greeks upon the grounds that while they despise the barbarians as inferior, they learnt all of their arts from them (chap 1). Boys-Stone (2001) shows that this type of argument, "the dependency theme", was part of an early and substantial tradition in Christianity (see especially chapter 9, and p. 200, where he mentions that although he has not dealt with the concept in Tatian, it does seem nonetheless to be first attested in Tatian and Hippolytus).

To commence with a purely logical observation about the question of Julian's sources, one can fairly remark that even if Julian did rely upon Iamblichos for all of the ideas and statements in the *Hymn to King Helios*, it may yet be that the stated fragments of the "Phoenician theology" are authentic. Iamblichos may, as a source on Phoenicia, be sound. Or, he may be neither uniformly reliable nor uniformly unreliable. I shall be suggesting below that Iamblichos probably had accurate information about some Phoenician ideas. In fact, I shall be proposing two points about Iamblichos and the Phoenicians: first, Iamblichos did have access to reliable material about the importance to the Phoenicians of the cult of the planet Venus as Morning and Evening Stars. Second, Iamblichos' interest was in the more esoteric side of Phoenician religion. It will be recalled that the Aphrodite Pericope was explicitly attributed to the "erudite".

JULIAN'S SOURCES FOR *HYMN TO KING HELIOS*

Although I conclude that Julian's debt to Iamblichos for the ideas in the *Hymn to King Helios* has been overstated, it is nonetheless a great debt. Further, one must concede that the view that the entire *Hymn* is sourced in Iamblichos is given a certain color by Julian's remarks in the Edessa Pericope. Julian states at one point that the data given there and τἆλλα πάντα (all the rest) is derived from Iamblichos.[32]

In his study of aspects of Iamblichos' theory of the soul, Finamore cites the Solar Pericope as evidence for the apparent view of Iamblichos and Julian that Helios was, for them, the demiurge, for "… it is through the sun that Helios sends his own noetic rays into the visible world".[33] It is striking that although Finamore even cites the word "Phoenician" he does not consider at all whether the doctrine is a Phoenician one, nor justify the way that he unhesitatingly treats it as Iamblichos' belief. However, this could simply mean that Finamore proceeds on the basis that whether or not it was originally Phoenician, Iamblichos came to

[32] *Hymn to King Helios* 150C-D.
[33] Finamore (1985) p. 137.

adopt that opinion, and hence it falls within the purview of his (i.e., Finamore's) work.[34]

I doubt that Julian's statement at 150C-D that "all the rest" is from Iamblichos can be taken as an absolute and exhaustive declaration. First, it is necessary to bear in mind that the *Hymn to King Helios* was composed in less than three nights,[35] and so, even if Julian had prepared the material he used in its writing, it was still a fairly hurried undertaking. One would not expect that each and every phrase had been carefully and deliberately weighed.[36] Second, and decisively, it is quite apparent from a balanced reading that in the *Hymn* Julian has used many and varied sources, and has not restricted himself to Iamblichos.

While Julian, at 150C-D, explicitly makes a connection between the Phoenician theology and Iamblichos, he quotes and acknowledges many other sources. This fact leads me to infer that when Julian wrote that "all the rest besides" was due to Iamblichos, he meant two things. First, that the overarching philosophical structure which informs this *Hymn* was due to Iamblichos, that is, the immense scheme of the cosmos and the possibility of human salvation through the agency of the various deities, each of whom is a partial manifestation of Helios.[37] Secondly, and specifically, he meant that at least some of the ideas of the "theology of the Phoenicians" as he has it, were sourced—directly or indirectly—in Iamblichos' writings. Thirdly, it is not impossible that this statement that "all the rest" is indebted to Iamblichos may simply be rather extravagant praise.

In examining the sources of the *Hymn to King Helios*, it is also necessary to study briefly Julian's use of sources generally, and to bear in mind that the importance of a writer or philosophy to Julian will be manifested not only in the number of times that the source is used, but even more critically, in Julian's use and valuation of the ideas and concepts he finds there. Ultimately, a writer's influence upon Julian must be chiefly judged by the influence of

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[34] The same view, that all of the ideas in *King Helios* can be attributed to Iamblichos, is repeated in Finamore (1993) p. 55 and n. 3.

[35] *Hymn to King Helios* 157B-C.

[36] This is all the more reason to ponder carefully whether its citations are accurate.

[37] Smith (1995) p. 159 phrases it by saying that the other gods are "a power, or a function, or a portion of his (Helios') essence".

that writer's ideas upon Julian's fundamental or organizing concepts.

PLATO

A simple reading of his corpus will easily and immediately demonstrate that Julian did in fact use sources other than Iamblichos in composing those works. Of these, the chief authority was Plato. In the *Hymn to King Helios* alone, Julian draws on Plato's *Timaios*,[38] *Politeia*,[39] *Kratylos*,[40] *Phaedo*,[41] the *Symposium*,[42] and the *Epinomis*.[43] Overall, there is an extent to which Julian's entire conceptual structure is Platonic, or as we say now, Neoplatonic. Platonism developed not only during Plato's lifetime (and there is no doubt that Plato did develop his ideas during his career), but especially after Plato's death. Wallis notes of Neoplatonism generally:

> The fundamental principle of Neoplatonism, that reality consists in a hierarchy of degrees of unity, is a systematisation of the Pythagorean-Platonic tradition's identification of goodness and order with form, measure and limit, which in their turn imply number and mathematical ratio and hence ultimately the presence of an organising unity; in Plato's oral teaching, as reported by Aristotle, the Forms were conceived as resulting from the imposition of Unity on the Indefinite Dyad. … Plotinus maintains that unity is necessary for a thing to exist at all; for any plurality, however indefinite, is always a plurality of things, each of which is one, since plurality without any unity could only be the utter indeterminacy of Matter.[44]

Platonism and Neoplatonism together comprise such a vast entity, an entity which raises so many difficult points of interpretation, that it would be impossible to say that any one formulation of its spirit or essence is satisfactory. Indeed, a student

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[38] *Hymn to King Helios* 131C, 139B, 143C, 146A-C and 152C.

[39] *Hymn to King Helios* 133A.

[40] *Hymn to King Helios* 136A.

[41] *Hymn to King Helios* 136A-B.

[42] *Hymn to King Helios* 145A

[43] *Hymn to King Helios* 152C. The idea here has affinities to that expressed in the *Epinomis* at 977A, but the concept, that numeration came to humans from observing the sky, is also known elsewhere.

[44] Wallis (1972) p. 48.

must read widely and at length in order to savor the peculiar "taste", so to speak, of Platonism.

To turn now to Julian's reading of Plato, one may briefly observe that Julian's sensibility, if not his method, was often *historical*. That is, Julian often and naturally related his thought to the historical development of ideas. This is not to suggest that Julian was systematic or rigorous in his method. However, he did have a deep and abiding interest in the past and in making connections between the ideas of different thinkers, philosophers and mythologists alike. This is demonstrated, in an interesting example, in the *Kronia* (i.e., *Saturnalia*) or "Symposium" which he penned in about 361.[45] That work can be taken as a lengthy fable (Julian calls it a μῦθος) concerning Roman history, especially the history of its rulers (hence Wright titles it *The Caesars*) and their religion.

When Julian deals with Plato, he is aware that historically, Plato was the pupil of Sokrates, and so Julian states:

> ὅσοι δὲ σῴζονται νῦν ἐκ φιλοσοφίας διὰ τὸν Σώκρατη σῴζονται
>
> As many as are now saved by philosophy, are saved by Sokrates.[46]

Julian places this rather absolute statement in the midst of an abbreviated family tree of modern schools of philosophy, all of which are traced back to Sokrates.[47] This is something of a flourish, as Julian must omit Pythagoras and his school to justify such high praise for Sokrates, but it is nonetheless significant that Sokrates, and not another, is the subject of this extravagance.

As noted, in the *Hymn to King Helios* Julian often makes reference to Plato's writings,[48] not infrequently paraphrasing him.

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[45] This work can be found in Wright (1913b) under the title of "The Caesars". Although this piece is not one of Julian's greatest works, and is in the form of a Lucianic satire, he characteristically weaves a number of serious ideas into it. For example, he remarks very early on that Plato would deal seriously with many things in myths: 306C.

[46] *Letter to Themistius* 264D. The *Letter* is found in Wright (1913b).

[47] *Letter to Themistius* 264C-D.

[48] In addition to specific dialogues referred to above, see *Hymn to King Helios* 132D. There are unattributed quotations at 139B and 145A,

For example, in the *Hymn to King Helios*, Julian speaks of how Helios acts as a unifier, a mediator and co-mingler, bringing together widely divergent elements. He says at 143C:

> Πρώτη δὴ τῶν δυνάμεών ἐστιν αὐτοῦ, δι᾽ ἧς ὅλην δι᾽ ὅλης τὴν νοερὰν οὐσίαν, τὰς ἀκρότητας αὐτῆς εἰς ἓν καὶ ταὐτὸ συνάγων, ἀποφαίνει μίαν. ὅσπερ γὰρ περὶ τὸν αἰσθητόν ἐστι κόσμον ἐναργῶς κατανοῆσαι, πυρὸς καὶ γῆς εἰλημμένον ἀέρα καὶ ὕδωρ ἐν μέσῳ τῶν ἄκρων σύνδεσμον …
>
> The first of his (i.e., Helios') powers is (the power) through which he reveals the entire noetic substance to be one right through the entirety. (He does this when) he brings together the furthest points of the whole into one and the same. For it is the very thing, as (when) in this world of sense-perception it is manifestly perceived that fire and earth have air and water placed in their midst, the bond of union of the furthest points …

This passage, not an easy one on any reading, is made a little more comprehensible by comparing it to *Timaios* 32b from which it was developed. There we find:

> οὕτω δὴ πύρος τε καὶ γῆς ὕδωρ ἀέρα τε ὁ θεὸς ἐν μέσῳ θείς ...
>
> In this manner, indeed, in the midst of fire and earth, water and air the deity (God) placing …

Plato's argument has been that fire and earth were the prime elements, but any two elements need a "unifying bond" or δέσμον … συναγωγόν.[49] Thus the other two elements were set in their midst in order make what was now the entire basic matter of the world "agree together" in a union which can be undone only by the deity, ὁ θεός, himself.[50] In other words, Julian is paraphrasing Plato, but also extending his argument, reasoning that just as this sensible

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referred to above. The epigram at 148B is believed to be Platonic: see Wright (1913a) p. 405 n. 2.

49 *Timaios* 31c.

50 *Timaios* 31b-32c. Although this does not belong in the body of the thesis, the word Plato uses and which I translate as "agree together" is ὁμολογῶ: "to speak the same". That is, each of the four elements is bound in a new composite, and they do take on a corporate character. Yet they retain their own individual "voices", that is, they *speak together*.

world forms a complex whole, so too does the noetic world, the world of the ideas and divinities which mediates between our own sensible world and that sublime κόσμος of the One.

So sometimes Julian cites Plato's *ipsissima verba*, and on occasions he openly names Plato. The borrowings are not always obvious, because sometimes Julian provides a close paraphrase, but omits to acknowledge explicitly that the original phrase was found in Plato. Often Julian will express an entire idea in terms some of which are found in Plato, but others of which are substituted for Plato's own words. It takes me too far from my main thesis to set out parallel passages and demonstrate Julian's usage. However, I will mention an extended passage in his second oration, dedicated to his cousin Constantius.[51] There, Julian cites a maxim from Plato, and substitutes a word of his (i.e., Julian's) own for one word of Plato's. To justify this liberty, Julian expends much labor in showing that the amended sense is totally consistent with Plato's original meaning.[52]

This shows the reverence with which Julian treated the Platonic heritage. Julian was not alone in this. In the late antique world, and certainly in Julian's age, "Christian monotheism was articulated in Platonic terms".[53] This seems to have been general throughout the educated Roman world. Even the cult of Theos Hypsistos "found a perfect expository partner in Neoplatonic philosophy".[54] One must be cautious because of the nature of our sources, but this cult seems to have been a "common ground" for pagans who were attracted to prayerful monotheistic worship of a deity closely associated with the sun, and also for Jews and Judaizers.[55]

The wide embrace of Neoplatonic philosophy facilitated the emergence of the notion that all the great thinkers of the past, especially Pythagoras, Plato, and Aristotle, were in essential agreement. Ammonios Saccas of Alexandria "harmonized", or

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[51] In Wright (1913a).

[52] *The Heroic Deeds of the Emperor Constantius* 68C-70D.

[53] Athanassiadi-Fowden and Frede (1999) p. 10.

[54] Mitchell (1999) p. 127.

[55] See Mitchell (1999) esp. pp. 88 and 111-115. The problem with the sources is not only that of their scarcity. Mitchell uses a number of inscriptions, but as he states, the inscriptions are often in terms which could equally relate to any one of a number of cults or religions.

"reconciled" as it were, Plato and Aristotle.[56] In the next generation, Ammonios' eminent pupil Plotinos, forged the Neoplatonic synthesis which dominated the ancient world, and is arguably still the greatest single philosophical influence upon Christianity. Fowden writes:

> … posterity, both pagan and Christian, saw these men as mutually compatible representatives of a single, albeit loosely defined succession, a Broad Church founded on a tacitly accepted Platonic orthodoxy, that was yet flexible enough to do without any formal definition of heresy.[57]

This study does not aim to exhaustively consider all of the influences on Julian, but it is worth noting that a recent study of Julian's concept of the philosopher-king (well known from the Plato of the *Republic*) seems to have fitted the model developed by Plotinos, with an important variation. Whereas Plotinos related the inspiration for his philosopher-king to the Good, an abstract metaphysical principle, in Julian, a myth is coined and the philosopher acts as commanded by Zeus.[58] This shows that while Julian was capable of metaphysical concepts, he also had a fondness for the concrete images and symbols of mythology, and could apply them creatively in his writings for mass circulation.

In this respect, Bouffartigue, who has counted Julian's references to any ancient writer and analyzed those references, concludes that for Julian, Plato was chiefly a moralist.[59]

ARISTOTLE

Aristotle was, without doubt, an important influence upon Julian, who in his surviving writings, cites him 23 times.[60] While many of the ideas in the *Hymn to King Helios* arguably stem directly or indirectly from Aristotle, he is also cited by name.[61] In one text, Julian, in a florid circumlocution for the name "Aristotle", speaks

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[56] Fowden (1979) p. 8.
[57] Fowden (1979) p. 82.
[58] O'Meara (1999) pp. 286-287.
[59] Bouffartigue (1992) pp. 52-60 and 170-197.
[60] Bouffartigue (1992) p. 65.
[61] *Hymn to King Helios* 142D-143A and 151D.

of the "all wise (πάνσοφος) siren", "the type of the wisdom of Hermes, the beloved of Apollo and the Muses".[62]

If Julian has a scheme for the harmonization of his diverse sources, the scheme takes the form of a hierarchy, at the apex of which is divine revelation, followed by the philosophy of Platonism (and Neoplatonic writers), and then, I would suggest, Aristotelian thought. In the *Hymn to the Mother of the Gods,* Julian states:

> ὅπου γε καὶ τὰς Ἀριστοτελικὰς ὑποθέσεις ἐνδεεστέρως ἔχειν ὑπολαμβάνω εἰ μὴ τις αὐτὰς ἐς ταὐτὸ τοῖς Πλάτωνος ἄγοι, μᾶλλον δὲ καὶ ταῦτα ταῖς ἐκ θεῶν δεδομέναις προφητείαις.
>
> Whereas I conceive that Aristotelian principles are deficient unless one makes them agree with those of Plato, or rather, that both of these (agree with) those prophecies granted (us) from the gods.[63]

That is, the harmonious union of these sources is effected by making Aristotle agree with Plato, and harmonizing both philosophers with the divine prophecies. Significantly, Plato is not to be reconciled with any and every prophecy: Julian only accepts those which are truly from the gods. This raises the interesting question of the criteria Julian used to discriminate between inconsistent prophets and prophecies, or if he did not accept that there could be inconsistencies, his principle of reconciliation. It is not appropriate to consider this issue here, as this is not a study of Julian for its own sake, but the prophecies themselves were, in the late ancient world, influenced by the Neoplatonic and monotheistic (maybe even perhaps pantheistic) principles of the time.[64] It is, however, important to observe that the fact that Julian realizes that Aristotle and his other sources had to be interpreted to be harmonized shows that he perceived that they did not easily sit together.

Perhaps the statement of principle which best clarifies Julian's use of the philosophers appears in the so-called *Letter to a Priest*,

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[62] *To the Cynic Herakleios* 237C.

[63] *Hymn to the Mother of the Gods* 162C.

[64] The theology of the oracles became monotheistic in the empire. The tendency to "monotheism" in the empire was most marked in the Roman East: Athanassiadi and Frede (1999) pp. 1-2, 15-17, and 19. See also West (1999) and Frede (1999) *passim*.

where Julian admonishes that a priest should read only philosophy, and of philosophers, only those who used the gods as guides (ἡγεμόνες) in their education (παιδεία). Those philosophers, he says, are those like Pythagoras, Plato, Aristotle, and the school of Chrysippos and Zeno (i.e., the Stoics).[65] The good philosophers are those who increase piety (εὐσέβεια) and teach some of the sound religious and philosophical notions which Julian sets out.[66]

Similarly, Julian seems to refer with approval to Diogenes' method. Diogenes, he said, considered that the founder of philosophy was god himself (ὁ θεός)—specifically the Pythian deity, Apollo—and not any human being. Therefore, Diogenes considered himself free to disagree with statements of Pythagoras and "anyone like Pythagoras".[67] Further, in another oration, Julian stresses that Pythagoras, Plato, and Aristotle themselves were reverent of the names of the gods.[68] Interestingly, this is not as untrue to Aristotle as might be thought. Aristotle himself unambiguously declared that in respect of his meteorology, he was influenced by religious ideas.[69] It will be recalled from chapter 1 that in the *Hymn to King Helios* Julian uses Aristotle's theory that the heavenly bodies are made up of the fifth element,[70] and he returned to this theory in the *Hymn to the Mother of the Gods*.[71]

The critical point for my thesis is that even if Julian used Aristotle sparingly—and one could never obtain an inkling of the depths or even the variety of Aristotelian thought from the references in Julian—he does provide accurate information about Aristotle's ideas. That is, even if Aristotle's ideas have been carefully selected and harmonized to fit in with Julian's

[65] *Letter to a Priest* 300D.

[66] *Letter to a Priest* 301A.

[67] *To the Uneducated Cynics* 191A-B. Diogenes is praised throughout this oration, perhaps most highly at 202D where it is said that the Hellenes of Plato and Aristotle's time esteemed him next to Sokrates and Pythagoras, and that he was the eminent Zeno's teacher.

[68] *To the Cynic Herakleios* 236D-237D.

[69] See the passages collated and analysed by Lloyd (1968) p. 136. Lloyd concludes that while Aristotle accepted the current notion that the celestial bodies were divine, he rejected the "anthropomorphic and zoomorphic elements" associated with that belief: Lloyd (1968) pp. 136-139.

[70] *Hymn to King Helios* 137C.

[71] *Hymn to the Mother of the Gods* 166D and 167D-168A.

Neoplatonic superstructure, the references to Aristotle are authentic.

OTHER WRITERS IN GREEK AND LATIN

Julian's arguments are studded with learned allusions to classical writers. Considered as a whole, the culture of ancient Greece, ἑλληνισμός, actually meant "paganism": the polytheistic religion which had passed into a sort of monotheism, and which Julian loved.[72] Throughout his corpus, Julian took particular pains to harmonize his doctrines with the poetical conceptions of Homer and Hesiod.[73] For Julian, Homer and Hesiod are ὁι πρεσβύτατοι τῶν ποιητῶν, "the elders (i.e., the most important) of the poets".[74] There is an interesting example in the *Hymn to King Helios* where Julian cites a seemingly neutral line from Homer, and makes a forced effort to relate it to his argument.[75] Then, later in the oration, he introduces a citation from Homer with the words:

> μὴ ποτε ὂυν καὶ θείᾳ μοίρᾳ τοῦτο Ὅμηρος· ἦν γάρ ὡς εἰκός, θεόληπτος· ἀπεμαντεύσατο πολλαχοῦ τῆς ποιήσεως …
>
> And was it not by divine providence that Homer said this—for he was quite likely god-taken when he prophetically announced at many places of his poetry …[76]

The importance of Homer in Julian's education, both academic and moral, must be carefully and fully acknowledged.[77] However, one should note that while Julian evidently holds Homer and the other great classical poets in high regard, he says that in the works of poets, ἔχει γὰρ μετὰ τοῦ θείου πολὺ καὶ τἀνθροπώνινον, "beyond what is divine, there is much which is human".[78]

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[72] Bouffartigue (1992) p. 659. Bouffartigue's study is an exhaustive treatment of Julian's use of other authors.

[73] *Hymn to King Helios* 136B-137C.

[74] *Hymn to King Helios* 136B.

[75] *Hymn to King Helios* 147D.

[76] *Hymn to King Helios* 149C.

[77] Athanassiadi-Fowden (1981) pp. 14-15 brings this out quite clearly. For Julian, the romance with Homer commences when his beloved tutor Mardonius (a Goth) introduces him to the poet at the age of seven.

[78] *Hymn to King Helios* 137C.

Julian never qualifies the Phoenician material in a similar manner. Immediately after this passage, Julian declares that now he must proceed to relate what it is that the deity himself teaches. This is perhaps an indication that the unattributed philosophical thoughts which follow are from oracles.[79] This is further evidence that for Julian oracular pronouncement was ranked above any other source, for example, in the Semele Pericope he quotes an oracle to prove the wisdom of the Phoenicians in theology.[80]

Julian cites Homer, by name or otherwise, at various places in the *Hymn to King Helios*.[81] Hesiod's *Works and Days* is quoted once, although not by title, in the *Hymn to King Helios*.[82] The influence of Homer, Hesiod, and Aristotle must be kept in perspective. While Julian had a particular reverence for the Platonists, he was, in very many respects, a broad Hellene. He would cite any Hellenic authority, and the more the better, as for example in his sixth oration, *To the Uneducated Cynics*, where he quotes in mutual support for his argument, the oracle of Delphi, Herakleitos, Pythagoras and the Pythagoreans, and Aristotle.[83]

In the *Hymn to King Helios*, he also cites Empedokles with the sole view, it would seem, of illustrating his (i.e., Julian's) own concept of "middleness" and showing that it is consistent with Empedokles' notion of "harmony" (ἁρμονία).[84] Once again, while Julian is very selective in what he takes from classical authors, and bends them to hypotheses they never conceived, his citations are accurate.[85]

A part of the difficulty we face in evaluating Julian's use of other authors is that we cannot be sure exactly who Julian read, and

[79] Compare this to his wording at *Hymn to King Helios* 149C.

[80] Note 162C, cited above, where Julian shows that he does not blindly accept every stated oracle to be a genuine one "from the god".

[81] 147A and 147D (the *Odyssey* and *Iliad* respectively), 149C, and 154B.

[82] *Hymn to King Helios* 158A.

[83] *To the Uneducated Cynics* 185A.

[84] *Hymn to King Helios* 138D.

[85] Julian is not indiscriminate: there are many authors he does not use, or uses sparingly. In particular, apart from the odd reference to an early writer like Herakleitos, Plato's contemporaries or predecessors (Pythagoras excepted) and most of the students of Plato and Aristotle, do not seem important to Julian.

even when we do know, the work in question may be lost. First, in the ancient world the convention of citing every author whom one employed in one's own work did not obtain. Second, there is reason to speculate that there was ancient learning on the sun which has not survived. This is not the place for a dissertation on the sun in the ancient world, but mention must be made of two authors, Menander Rhetor writing before Julian, and Ammianus writing after him.

As noted in chapter 2, the dates of Menander are uncertain, and in particular, it is by no means certain that he wrote both of the works attributed to him, either in whole or in part. However, on the basis of sundry references, both treatises are believed to date from the reign of Diocletian or later.[86] In chapter 17 of the second work, Περὶ Ἐπιδεικτικῶν, (*Concerning Epideictic*), Menander deals with the "Sminthiac Oration". After some words about the introductory prooemia, he comes to the hymn itself and suggests something along these lines:

> ὦ Σμίνθιε Ἄπολλον, τίνα σε χρὴ προσειπεῖν; πότερον ἥλιον τὸν τοῦ φωτὸς ταμίαν καὶ πηγὴν τῆς οὐρανίου ταύτης αἴγλης, ἢ νοῦν, ὡς ὁ θεολογούντων λόγος, διήκοντα μὲν διὰ τῶν οὐρανίων, ἰόντα δὲ δι᾽ αἰθέρος ἐπὶ τὰ τῇδε;

> O Sminthian Apollo, how should I speak to you? As the sun the master of light and spring of the heavenly radiance, or as mind, as is the doctrine of the theologians, extending throughout the heavens, coursing through the ether even unto this place?[87]

Russell and Wilson observe that the idea of Apollo as sun was first known from Aischylos and Euripides and was "perhaps originally a Pythagorean idea" which spread under Stoic influence.[88] They take the idea of Apollo as mind to be related to the identification of Apollo with the sun, and point to Stoic influence.[89]

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[86] Russell and Wilson (1981) pp. xxxiv-xl.

[87] *Concerning Epideictic* 438:11-15.

[88] Russell and Wilson (1981) pp. 352-3, referring to Aischylos' *The Suppliants* 213ff and Euripdes, fr. 781 N. They also provide references to Stoic and anti-Stoic ideas.

[89] Russell and Wilson (1981) p. 353, citing Cleanthes in *SVF* 1.499 where the sun is said to be the ἡγεμονικόν οφ τηε κόσμος, and Pliny *NH* 2.12 "mundi totius animum ac planius mentem".

While they discern Stoic influence in the concept that mind "penetrates" or "passes through" the cosmos, they see a Platonic style in the difference between the terrestrial and the supernal worlds. The idea is seen as implicit within Plato's analogy of the relationships between light and the sun, and between truth and mind.[90] Among later works, they note the similarity to a passage in the *Corpus Hermeticum* and to the Solar Pericope in the *Hymn to King Helios*, although they do not note that this is said to be the doctrine of the Phoenicians.[91]

There is an interesting passage dating from after Julian's reign in Ammianus Marcellinus' *Rerum Gestarum* ("Of Acts Done", "History") which must be considered in this context, although it cannot be suggested that it identifies any of Julian's sources. It is not clear what source Ammianus has used, but there is a reference to the Sibyllic mode of prophecy, thus suggesting that he is using some occult classical source. Ammianus sometimes treats of philosophical matters in the extant portions of his history: for example, he explains the astronomical basis of eclipses.[92] Then, in book 21, after Julian has been acclaimed in Gaul as Augustus by his troops in 360, Ammianus reports Julian's preparations against Constantius, indicating that in certain respects, Julian had been fortified in his schemes by signs and some of his dreams. Now is the time, Ammianus declares, to explain something about divination, so that people will not think it improper that an emperor should be adept in such arts.

There is a spirit in the elements (*elementorum omnium spiritus*), which is everywhere, and has knowledge of what is to pass. Humans must be prepared by their own (magical) arts, and then, if they please the elemental powers with different rites (*substantiales potestates ritu diverso placatae*), these powers will then provide signs. This is due not to the will of the creatures used in divination, but to the *benignitas numinis*, the favor of the *numen*, the god or spirit.[93] Then, in what seems to be a complementary provision for knowledge of the future, the prophecy is given not through creatures, but through the hearts of men (*hominum corda*) who

[90] Russell and Wilson (1981) p. 353 citing *Republic* 7.517C.

[91] Russell and Wilson (1981) p. 353 citing *Corpus Hermeticum* 16.6.

[92] Ammianus 20.3.

[93] Ammianus 21.1.1-10.

nonetheless speak what is divine (*locuntur divina*). Ammianus explains the mechanism of the phenomenon thus:

> Sol enim (ut aiunt physici) mens mundi nostras mentes ex sese velut scintillas diffunditans cum eas incenderit vehementius, futuri conscias reddit. Unde Sibyllae crebro se dicunt ardere, torrente vi magna flammarum.[94]
>
> For the sun (so the naturalists say),[95] is the mind of the world. The sun diffuses our minds from himself in the manner of sparks, so that when he has powerfully kindled these (sc. our minds) he renders them aware of what is about to be. Hence the Sybils repeatedly say that they are burning, by the scorching power of flames.

Ammianus wrote after Julian's death. One expects that had he read the *Hymn to King Helios,* he would have cited the Solar Pericope in connection with his theory. But then, Ammianus may have known the work imperfectly, he may have forgotten that part, or judged that it was not as appropriate as the material he ultimately included.[96]

Unfortunately, we do not know the identity of Ammianus' *physici.* Ammianus makes use of diverse sources, and is not above an appeal to the arcane. For instance, in describing the customs surrounding the Apis bull in Egypt, he refers to "the secret authority of mystic books" (*secreta librorum … auctoritas mysticorum*).[97] This does not seem to be a conceit on Ammianus' part, who was unaware of the modern distinctions between science, religion, and magic. In mentioning the Magi, Ammianus states that Plato, "the most eminent and greatest author" (*insignium auctor amplissimus*), considered "magic" (literally *magia*—the things Magi do) was the least corrupt worship of the gods, and that this system of knowledge (*scientia*) was derived from the Chaldeans.[98]

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[94] Ammianus 21.1.11.

[95] The term *physici* can mean "natural philosophers". "Naturalists" is to an extent a modern term. But it is close in form and significance to the Latin, and I think Ammianus means to stress that the people he cites are close students of nature.

[96] Matthews (1989) deals with this passage at pp. 124-125.

[97] Ammianus 22.14.7. "Secret" meaning "guarded", or "not for public dissemination".

[98] Ammianus 23.6.32. Kingsley (1993) would emphatically agree in respect of Plato's regard for the Magi.

Although the *Rerum Gestarum* is, as its title would suggest, chiefly devoted to acts of the Roman Emperors, Ammianus was well educated, and humane learning is apparent throughout this book. In one passage, mentioning the "immortal poems" (*sempiternis … carminibus*) of Homer, he refers to a number of men who performed great deeds with the aid of guardian spirits who lived with, or engaged with them (*genios cum eisdem versatos*). These men included Pythagoras, Sokrates, Hermes Trismegistus, Apollonius of Tyana, Plotinos, Numa Pompilius, Scipio Africanus, Augustus, and others. Ammianus' discussion of how these *genii* engage with humans is attributed to Plotinos.[99]

The notion of the relationship between the sun and mind presented in Menander and Ammianus is clearly consistent with the Solar Pericope, but equally clearly they are not precisely the same. I mention these passages only in order to show that ideas relating the sun and mind were current in antiquity, and thus to indicate that it is quite possible that Julian did not need to refer to the Phoenician doctrine as authority for this point. However, we do not know whether Julian was in fact acquainted with Menander, Pliny, the *Corpus Hermeticum*, and Cleanthes.[100] Further, there are differences between these ideas and those of the Solar Pericope. First, the Solar Pericope is related to the Aphrodite Pericope where the goddess helps the sun god in his work. Second, the Solar Pericope refers to the solar rays as representing the action of mind in its purity, leaving open the possibility of further development concerning mixtures. Third, this possibility seems to have been at least partly actualized by the Aphrodite and the Edessa Pericopes which follow soon after and thus relate this concept to a broader network of ideas.

Given that the link between the sun and the mind seems to have existed in other sources at or around the time Julian wrote the *Hymn to King Helios*, it raises the question whether Julian needed to cite the Phoenicians as authority for the proposition. The likeliest supposition seems to be that Julian invoked the Phoenicians because a Phoenician doctrine, similar to the one he was espousing, was to hand. A further, and in some ways more interesting possibility, is whether there was a congruence between certain ideas

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[99] Ammianus 21.14.5.

[100] Ammianus, of course, wrote after Julian's death.

which arose in Phoenicia, and other ideas as they developed in Greece. That is, it is by no means necessary to assume that if the Hellenistic world conceived doctrines similar to those in the Solar Pericope, they cannot also have been conceived in Phoenicia. Not every similarity will necessarily point to a borrowing.

In fact, in this instance, the equivalence between the sun and the mind would seem to be fairly natural. The sun and the mind both "enlighten" in their individual ways. The sun clarifies, so to speak. Greek philosophy is not needed to explain such a connection. However, as I shall demonstrate later, the association of the sun with judgment was current in Mesopotamia long before Greek philosophy developed. Second, and perhaps most importantly, it can be shown that there was a native Phoenician tradition associated with speculation about the sun.

PYTHAGORAS AND OTHERS

In addition to other influences upon Julian's thought, scholars believe that they can detect the influence of Neo-Pythagoreanism.[101] There are two chief obstacles to establishing this securely. The first, and the greatest, is that we are almost entirely bereft of reliable evidence about Pythagoras, and little which can be safely called Pythagorean or Neo-Pythagorean has survived. The second is that the Neo-Pythagorean movement was in some ways more practical than theoretical, although the theoretical side was impressive. As Fowden states, the most distinctive evidence of Neo-Pythagorean influence in late ancient philosophy is in its "emphasis on the desirability of an ascetic and religious lifestyle".[102] In this respect, I think that the influence of Pythagoras in Julian must be admitted, but, then, it is such a broad matter that it does not tell us very much.

In the letter *To Theodoros, the High Priest*, Julian expresses his regard for Pythagoras in a rather elliptical fashion, stating the saying "he himself said", Αὐτὸς ἔφα, carries weight with him.[103] This is a well known Pythagorean saying. In this context, the sense

[101] Smith (1995) p. 146.

[102] Fowden (1979) p. 18. He notes at p. 116 that Pythagoreanism was characteristically a "way of communal life".

[103] In Wright (1923) pp. 56-57. Wright translates as "the Master has said", and notes that in Latin it became *ipse dixit*.

seems to be (despite a lack of clarity in the text) that because Theodoros is a Pythagorean, Julian loves and trusts him. The letter goes on to place him in charge of all temples in Asia, with power over the priestly appointments.

This raises the possibility that Julian may have had a closer connection with the Neo-Pythagoreans than supposed. In the letter *To Philip*, he says that he will teach his tongue the "Pythagorean thing", meaning—as Wright has translated—he will learn to hold his silence.[104] Julian, in his letter *To Salutius*, uses the silence of those "initiated" or "made perfect", τελεσθέντων, by Pythagoras as proverbial for strict secrecy.[105] In an extant fragment, Julian seems to number Pythagoras among those who could provide us with first hand information about the underworld.[106]

This is all intriguing, but it is too little material to weave into whole cloth. However, Pythagoras was not, to Julian, simply some saint of philosophy to be honored on an altar. Julian had an acquaintance with the living Pythagorean tradition. How close an acquaintance, we cannot say now.

It has been confidently argued that Julian used Mithraic ideas in the *Hymn*, but Smith's study finds this unlikely,[107] and I agree with him to this extent: I do not think that at the end of the day, the influence of Mithraism on this document has been demonstrated. In the *Hymn to King Helios* he speaks of Mithras worship as a recent practice, and thinks it less impressive for that reason.[108] This is the only reference to Mithras I could find in this oration, and I could not locate any reference at all to Mithras in Julian's other philosophical oration, the *Hymn to the Mother of the Gods*. Smith examined the issue in some detail, and concluded that although Mithraic influence was possible, it could only be countenanced as a serious factor in Julian's thought if it had been an element in the formation of Iamblichos' thought; and as Smith noted, there is no evidence of that.[109]

However, while we can say that, at times, Julian's relationship to Mithraism has been exaggerated, it is hard to delimit in what that

[104] Wright (1923) p. 107.
[105] Wright (1913b) p. 195.
[106] Wright (1923) p. 297, fragment 4.
[107] Smith (1995) pp. 142-159.
[108] *Hymn to King Helios* 155B.
[109] Smith (1995) pp. 143-151 and 163-171.

relationship did consist. At the end of the *Kronia*, Hermes admonishes Julian not to forget his father, Mithras, to keep his (i.e., Mithras') injunctions, and to seek him as a "guide god" (ἡγεμόνα θεὸν) when he dies.[110]

I have left perhaps the most controversial figures for the last in this chapter: Julian was also influenced by the Neoplatonists Maximos of Ephesus, whose companionship he valued, and Aidesios. The figure of Maximos is an enigmatic one. It is perhaps idiosyncratic to mention him before Iamblichos, as he was one of Iamblichos' second generation pupils. Aidesios, who had been one of Iamblichos' personal students and was considered one of the best, retired after Iamblichos' death in obedience to a message he believed to be of supernatural origin. However, he attracted so many pupils, even in solitude, that he returned to Pergamum, where Julian sought him out. The sources for his life, and more importantly, that of Maximos are few, and what we have are fairly poor.[111]

Maximos is believed to have initiated Julian into the Neoplatonic mysteries, in a cave at Ephesus, probably in 351. Unfortunately, we are not at all sure of the nature of these mysteries.[112] Maximos has hardly had the best press. When Turcan slighted the *Chaldaean Oracles* through guilt by association, he associated them with Maximos: "It is no surprise to learn that the emperor Julian, greatly enthused by the prestidigitatory talents of Maximus of Ephesus, was an avid reader of the Oracles …".[113]

But whatever else he was, Maximos seems to have been loyal to Julian, and the three surviving letters to Maximos should remove any doubt of the emperor's affections.[114] We can be certain that he was one of the great supports of Julian's intellectual and spiritual life, accompanying him into Persia on his final campaign. Ammianus relates that when Julian was on his deathbed "he more

[110] In Wright (1913b) p. 415.

[111] Smith (1995) pp. 29-30 and 91; Bouffartigue (1992) p. 21; and Reale (1990) p. 421. There are some brief notices of Aedesios in Eunapius: pp. 377-379, 391-393, and 429-431. Eunapius provides more data on Maximos, of which the most important is perhaps the striking eye witness portrait of Maximos as an old man: p. 427.

[112] Athanassiadi-Fowden (1981) p. 37; Bouffartigue (1992) p. 21.

[113] Turcan (1992) p. 289.

[114] Letters 8, 12, and 59 in Wright (1923).

intricately examined/discussed, with the philosophers Maximos and Priscos, concerning the loftiness of souls" (… *ipse cum Maximo et Prisco philosophis super animorum sublimate perplexius disputans*).[115]

Earlier, while emperor in Constantinople, he had been in the senate when he heard that Maximos had arrived from "Asia" (perhaps Ephesus). Julian apparently leaped up from his place, ran out to greet Maximos with a kiss, and brought him back to the senate. This and other incidents are recounted by Ammianus as examples of how ostentatiously Julian eschewed the formalities and dignities of the purple. These incidents are probably true, for Ammianus was almost lavish when he came to praise Julian, but here reprimands him by brandishing a rather severe passage from Cicero.[116] While his welcome of Maximos may have had the ulterior motive of demonstrating how "natural" Julian could be although emperor, it was nonetheless Maximos for whom he made this fulsome display. It is a pity that we do not have more reliable information about Maximos and his influence upon Julian's intellectual development.

It is, however, evident that Julian was a ready and eager learner. In the next chapter I examine his relationship with the most controversial of all his teachers, the one whom Julian hailed as "divine Iamblichos".

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[115] Ammianus 25.3.23.

[116] Ammianus 22.7.1-4.

CHAPTER 5
JULIAN AND IAMBLICHOS

A recent study of Iamblichos observed that almost nothing is known of his life, except that he lived between about 240 and 325 CE.[1] Iamblichos was born into a wealthy family in Chalcis ad Belum (modern Qinnesrin), east of the Orontes River (today the River Al-Asi). His name, which is probably either Aramaic or the closely related Syriac, seems to have been a Hellenization of the attested name "Yamlikel", and probably means "El is king" (or "El rules"). This name had long been an aristocratic one in the history of Emesa, being attested in the mid-second century BCE when Emesa first enters the stage of history. The Iamblichos with whom we are concerned did trace his ancestry back to the early kings of Emesa, Sampsigeramus, and Monimos.[2]

That Iamblichos studied Neoplatonism is beyond doubt, but whether he was actually a pupil of Porphyry of Tyre (and studied with him not at Tyre, but in Rome), and if so, why he left Porphyry and returned to teach in Syria, is unclear. There is some reason to think that he was attached to Porphyry's school, and was instructed, perhaps initially, by one Anatolios, for whom Porphyry wrote *The Homeric Questions*, and of whom little else is known. But it is clear that once Iamblichos had returned to Syria, he founded a school, renowned for the excellence of its students, at either or both Apamea and Daphne near Antioch. Apamea would have been an auspicious location, as it had been a center of Platonism and of paganism.[3] As Dillon notes, these spots are not far apart.[4] In the

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[1] Dillon (1987) p. 863, and see also his earlier views, Dillon (1973) pp. 3-18. Portions of this earlier material have been carried over into the later work, often with elaboration or development.

[2] Fowden (1979) p. 85.

[3] Fowden (1979) pp. 86-88 and 181. At p. 274 he provides details of some mosaics found at Apamea which depict the seven sages, one of whom was Sokrates.

[4] Dillon (1987) pp. 863-871. On the name also see Dillon (1973) p. 5 n. 1. Dillon translates the name correctly, but is unaware of the full Semitic name, which is found in Ball (2000) p. 34 and n. 21.

late antique world, philosophy's fortunes were brighter in the East than in the West.[5]

One unavoidable difficulty in evaluating Iamblichos is that few of his writings have survived, and most of what has been preserved is fragmentary.[6] While I refer to Iamblichos' works where possible, so much analysis is frequently needed simply to establish their meaning, that one is obliged to rely extensively upon secondary sources. This is unfortunate, but entire books are written exploring basic questions of Iamblichos' thought. Another problem is that we have Julian's explicit testimony that Iamblichos was not interested in every type of myth, but only in those which concerned the τελεστικοί, the mysteries. Julian cites Iamblichos' interest in the mysteries of Orpheus as an example.[7] Thus, one might well expect that were Iamblichos interested in the Phoenician religion, he would be chiefly, or even solely, concerned with its more esoteric side.

IAMBLICHOS' PHILOSOPHY

The major concerns of Iamblichos' philosophy seem, to me, to cluster around an axial point: the necessity that philosophy make a difference in one's life so that it becomes a practical art of wisdom, and not only a mental pursuit.

Iamblichos possessed intellectual curiosity and application, and was zealous to reforge the links between the rational discipline of philosophy and the search for religious or spiritual fulfilment. As a philosopher in the Neoplatonic tradition, he paid close attention to methodology. For example, Iamblichos argued that a canon of interpretation was needed for crucial works like Plato's. Specifically, the overall aim of any particular dialogue had to be borne steadily in mind. This would allow a balanced reading of the text to appear, because although the dialogue might deal with many diverse issues, if its purpose was borne in mind, it could be seen that the *metaphysics* of the dialogue would provide a *model*, and when that model was worked out, say in *mathematics* or *physics*, they would then be the *image of the model*. For its time, this was quite an achievement.[8]

[5] Fowden (1979) p. 254.
[6] This is true of both Iamblichos and Porphyry: O'Meara (1989) p. 2.
[7] *To the Cynic Herakleios* 217C.
[8] Reale (1990) pp. 413 and 417-418.

Beyond this, it highlights an important and characteristic aspect of Iamblichos' thought: the idea of *unity in diversity*.

Iamblichos was not the first to articulate the idea that behind the multiplicity of appearances there lies a substantial unity. But Iamblichos employed that insight as a master-key. With it, he related diverse subjects, and religious ideas, so as to provide a new perspective on the whole, and on each part. In that respect, his attitude to the religions and spirituality of the peoples of the Eastern Roman Empire was all of a piece with his theology. Iamblichos was also concerned to harmonize Plato, Aristotle, and Pythagoreanism.[9] It was not always possible to nicely reconcile them, and when Iamblichos undertook this enterprise he was independently trying to forge a systematic and embracing world-view. Iamblichos was no blind follower of some revered master: he would criticize even Plotinos if he thought it justified. Shaw has recently demonstrated that Iamblichos' departure from Plotinos in holding that the incarnation of the soul in the body significantly affected the soul, is due to Iamblichos' greater appreciation for Aristotle's psychological ideas.[10]

Modern works on Neoplatonism frequently note Iamblichos' deviations from his Platonic predecessors. Steel notes that although like most before him, Iamblichos held the soul to be incorporeal, he distinguished it from the Intellect and considered it "to be a separate and lower hypostasis". Further, he placed the soul in a more complex ontological hierarchy of incorporeal entities, beneath the Intellect, and "heroes, demons, angels and the en-cosmic gods". Unlike Plotinos, Iamblichos insisted that in this hierarchy there was an *essential* difference between the souls of humans and those of daemons and the divine entities.[11]

As stated, Iamblichos was also concerned to reconcile his Neoplatonic theurgy to what he conceived to be traditional and ancient wisdom.[12] For example, Iamblichos taught that the three

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[9] Fowden (1979) p. 33. Dillon (1973) p. 21. One writer goes so far as to say that, for Iamblichos, Platonic thought is Pythagorean: O'Meara (1989) p. 42. Iamblichos' harmonization of the Platonic and Aristotelian theories of light is outlined in Finamore (1993).

[10] Shaw (1993) pp. 117-118.

[11] Steel (1978) pp. 27-28.

[12] According to Finamore (1985) p. 100, Iamblichos took delight in supplementing Plotinos and Porphyry by reference to the ancient wisdom.

monads of his philosophy were present in the Orphic myths, although concealed by the symbol of the Egg.[13] The question of traditional wisdom brings us to Iamblichos and the Phoenicians, and to the larger question of Iamblichos' philosophical system.

The earlier almost universal judgment that Iamblichos represented a decline in Neoplatonism has been thoroughly revised. For example, Iamblichos holds a place of honor in recent research into the philosophy of time in the ancient world. Thus Sambursky and Pines state that: "… even if he had contributed nothing else but his theory of time, the place of Iamblichus in the history of philosophy would be secure".[14]

It is now recognized that a "serious spirituality" subsists in the ideas of theurgy.[15] Before turning to Iamblichos' works, I note there is anecdotal biographical evidence of Iamblichos' "transcendental heliolatry", to use Cumont's phrase.[16] In one of the few informative biographical notices we have of Iamblichos, we are told that he solemnly observed the celebrations for the joint rising of the sun with Sirius.[17] It is perhaps just here, in the stress placed upon cultic practice, that Iamblichos' influence upon Julian is most clearly seen, although it is an indirect influence, as Iamblichos died a little before Julian's birth. So far as we can tell, Plotinos had not said very much about theurgy.[18] However, certain of Plotinos' theories—especially that concerning prayer—prepared the ground for theurgy.[19] Indeed, Shaw states: "Iamblichus' soteriology may be seen as an elaboration of certain themes already developed by Plotinos".[20]

He was generous in his assessment of the Gnostics, mentioning them in the same breath as Herakleitos and Albinos: Pearson (1992) p. 267.

[13] Damascios *On the "Philebos"*, cited in Dillon (1973) pp. 104-105. Iamblichos also adopts Orphic doctrines (and other mythological concepts) at 1.17 of his *Protreptikos*, see Iamblichos (1989b) p. 38.

[14] Sambursky and Pines (1987) p. 21. See also Sorabji (1983) pp. 33-45.

[15] Fowden (1979) p. 38.

[16] Cumont (1909) p. 31.

[17] Dillon (1973) p. 17 and the sources collected there.

[18] Pearson (1992) pp. 253-254 seems to infer that Plotinos was opposed to religious ritual simply because of his dislike of the Gnostic use of ritual. This does not necessarily follow.

[19] Fowden (1979) p. 15, see also pp. 16-17.

[20] Shaw (1993) p. 117.

Porphyry—one of the most eminent Neoplatonists between Plotinos and Iamblichos—seems to have played down Plotinos' "more generous view of the underlying relationship between the cult of the gods and philosophy".[21] The tendency to posit a "true" Neoplatonism, or a sort of "Neoplatonic orthodoxy", should be resisted: this finds no basis in the ancient sources and reflects modern value judgments. While Porphyry, at least in his younger days, had defended theurgy as a supplement to theology (and this view was shared by many Neoplatonists), he later changed his mind, even if his new position was perhaps ambiguous.[22] O'Meara states that Porphyry saw contemporary Greek philosophy as a "degraded version" of ancient Egyptian and Chaldean ideas.[23] I am skeptical: there is no trace at all of such a view in his *Homeric Questions*, or in his essay on the *Cave of the Nymphs*, both of which celebrate Greek poetry.

The fact that Porphyry was apparently the first well known teacher in a *philosophical* tradition to give the *Chaldaean Oracles* serious consideration, would be consistent with this.[24] However, the harmonization of the *Oracles* with Neoplatonism will forever be associated with Iamblichos, and equally, Iamblichos, even more than Porphyry, gave historical priority to the sages of the East.[25] For Iamblichos, theurgy was vital. It made possible for certain souls the needed purification of τὸν τῆς ψυχῆς νοῦν, "the nous/mind of the soul", something rarely achievable through theology and philosophy alone.[26] This purification was theurgically effected through the rite of "Elevation", which Finamore describes

[21] Fowden (1986) p. 130.

[22] Dillon (1973) pp. 28-29 and Fowden (1986) pp. 130-131.

[23] O'Meara (1989) pp. 101-102.

[24] Fowden (1986) p. 131.

[25] O'Meara (1989) p. 102.

[26] There is a vast literature on this topic. See Shaw (1993), Finamore (1985) pp. 126-146, and the works cited by Dillon, *passim*. The Greek phrase attributed to Iamblichos is found in Proklos' *Commentary on* "Alkibiades", extracted at Dillon (1973) pp. 74-75.

as a "Chaldaean sacrament".[27] Unfortunately, the substantial work which Iamblichos wrote on the *Chaldaean Oracles* is lost.[28]

Iamblichos was not an uncritical reader of the *Chaldaean Oracles*. The *Oracles* taught that the vehicle of the soul was composed of "ether, the sun, the moon, and the air". Iamblichos did not accept that the matter of the three celestial deities was involved. If I understand Iamblichos correctly, that view was rejected because it would make the vehicle of the soul soluble (understanding the "sun" as the sun of the material realm), and he did not believe that it was.[29] In Iamblichos' view, the vehicle "… is ethereal and created whole by the Demiurge, and not subject to destruction or dissolution of any kind".[30] It appears that in the Chaldean view, as well as in Neoplatonism, human beings contain within themselves all of the elements of the universe (hence the material of the sun, moon, and air). It is attested that Iamblichos and Porphyry agreed on this point:

> πάντα εἶναι πανταχοῦ λέγοντες ἄλλως μέντοι καὶ ἄλλως
>
> Saying that all things are everywhere, but differently and otherwise.[31]

In this bold attempt to create a unified theory of words and practice, the sun had a central role. I have been unable to find anywhere in Iamblichos a statement in the precise terms of the Solar Pericope. However, statements which complement and are consistent with that Pericope were attributed to Iamblichos. Yet, Finamore weaves the concepts of the *Hymn to King Helios* together

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[27] Finamore (1985) p. 126.

[28] Finamore (1985) p. 127. There is a good concise reconstruction of Iamblichos' defence of theurgy in Pearson (1992) pp. 255-256. See also Shaw (1993) *passim*.

[29] The sun had a central role for Iamblichos in the ascent of the soul: Finamore (1985) pp. 130-131.

[30] Finamore (1985) pp. 27 and 127.

[31] Damascios, *On the "Philebos"*, cited in Dillon (1973) pp. 102-103. These last six words are difficult to understand, let alone translate. Dillon's translation: "all things are everywhere, but in different modes in different places" is, with respect, a better one, if only because he interprets and expands the concept. The formulation seems to me to be deliberately concise, if not cryptic.

with those of later Neoplatonists, to show that Iamblichos almost certainly developed a refined theory of light.

In this synthesis, the One (which of Iamblichos' "Ones" this might be is unclear) radiates incorporeal light. This emanates downwards through the tripartite schema of the worlds, and by the time it has reached our planetary realm, this light has taken on corporeality.[32] Therefore, the sunlight of this earthly realm is a bridge or point of connection to the higher realms, for these realms are *noeric* and *noetic*, in each case associated with more and more refined intellectual qualities.[33] As we saw in chapter 1, this view is central to Julian's doctrine as presented in the *Hymn to King Helios*. Therefore, the Solar Pericope may well be something Julian has learnt from Iamblichos. It is not possible, unless new texts are found, to prove or disprove this.

IAMBLICHOS AND THE PHOENICIANS

There is a little evidence for Iamblichos' attitude to the Phoenicians. In his short work *De Vita Pythagorica* ("On the Pythagorean Life"),[34] Iamblichos makes some connections between Phoenicia and the protagonist of that book. Pythagoras' philosophy, says Iamblichos, was divinely inspired. The soul which was incarnated in the body of Pythagoras was sent from Apollo's entourage.[35] Pythagoras' physical body, however, was born at Sidon in Phoenicia.[36] He was, as it were, a sort of bridge between the wisdoms of the East and Greece.[37] He traveled to Egypt, at Thales' insistence, to be instructed by the priests in their ancient mysteries. Thence he returned to his birthplace and was initiated into the

[32] Finamore (1993) especially pp. 60-61.

[33] In this scheme, the light in question is the sun-light: Finamore (1985) pp. 134 and 137.

[34] The original title of this work is believed to have been Περὶ τῆς Πυθαγορικῆς αἱρεσέως, "On the Pythagorean Sect (Movement)": O'Meara (1989) pp. 32-33.

[35] Iamblichos saw Pythagoras's soul as a noetic one which had "descended solely for the salvation, purification, and perfection of the world": Shaw (1993) p. 122.

[36] *De Vita Pythagorica*, 1-2.8 [pp. 1-3 in Clark (1999)].

[37] He has a similar role in Porphyry's life of Pythagoras: chapters 1-12 and 41.

mysteries of Byblos, Tyre, and Syria. These mysteries are, we are told, derived from the Egyptian mysteries.[38]

According to Iamblichos, Pythagoras returned to Egypt for twenty-two years, where he was captured by Kambyses of Persia, and forcibly removed to Babylon.[39] There he stayed another twelve years while he furthered his studies in the wisdom of the East with the Magi. When he moved to Samos, he was fifty-six years old. In the Greek world, he disseminated the teachings he had acquired (especially those of Egypt) in a symbolic form.[40]

Iamblichos depicts Phoenicia and its "son" Pythagoras as *connectors* and *means of cross-fertilization* in the Mediterranean world. As stated, this search for links is a quintessential feature in Iamblichos. The Phoenician connection is given prominence by Porphyry and Iamblichos, themselves from Phoenicia and Syria respectively.[41] The most ancient sources[42] do not actually state that Pythagoras was born in Samos, although they certainly state that he lived there for a while. However, as Burkert observes, all of our biographical and historical sources for Pythagoras weres written after the time of Aristotle, and are such that: "one is tempted to say that there is not a single detail in the life of Pythagoras that stands uncontradicted".[43] Despite the efforts of historians, we still do not know all of the sources available to Iamblichos.[44] The testimony of Iamblichos and Porphyry cannot lightly be dismissed, especially in view of the Greek tendency to downplay the importance of "barbarian" culture.[45]

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[38] *De Vita Pythagorica*, 2.12-3.16 [pp. 5-7 in Clark (1999)].

[39] This story is chronologically not feasible: Burkert (1972) p. 112 n. 16.

[40] *De Vita Pythagorica*, 4.18-5.20 [p. 8 in Clark (1999)].

[41] Kingsley (1995) p. 293 contends that much of what has been taken to be a late and worthless fabrication, may in fact plausibly continue ideas which have been current in the Pythagorean tradition, but were not attested at earlier dates. However, there is earlier biographical material about Pythagoras, and, in Porphyry the link is not with Sidon but with Tyre (although ancient sources often mistake these two cities).

[42] Such as Herodotos 4.95.

[43] Burkert (1972) p. 109.

[44] Burkert (1972) pp. 98-105.

[45] In chapter 4, I cited Coleman (1997) p. 175 on the ethnocentricity of the Greeks, their view of the superiority of their own culture, and that they "tended to look down upon and despise foreigners".

If we are unsure of the credibility of Iamblichos' statements about Pythagoras, it is, however, clear that Iamblichos is partial to the Phoenicians and has a high opinion of their wisdom. This is no reason to suspect that Iamblichos would attribute his own philosophical views to them by legerdemain. As we saw, when it came to his canons of interpretation, Iamblichos was by no means woolly-headed. To Iamblichos, the use of symbols was an important stage in the development of philosophy. For him, it is not Sokrates who founds philosophy, as it is for Julian. Iamblichos gives this honor to Pythagoras, who—he says—was the first to say of himself that he was a philosopher.[46] It seems to me that at least part of the purpose of Iamblichos' protreptic biography of Pythagoras is to demonstrate that there is development even within the august court of philosophy, for "symbols" and "secrets" belonged to the teaching of wisdom in Egypt and most ancient Greece. This later became philosophy in Pythagoras' hands in the Greek world. Today, Iamblichos says, the teaching of philosophy must be given a new garb, and the "riddling form" removed.[47] There is also reliable evidence that Iamblichos followed Pythagoras in interpreting the ancient myth of Prometheus and Epimetheus as referring to the descent of gods into nature (εἰς τὴν φύσιν) and their return to the "noetic" or intellectual world (τὸ νοητόν), respectively.[48] The evidence is ambivalent, but O'Meara concludes that Iamblichos actually attempted to revive Pythagoreanism as a philosophy.[49]

This is fairly significant. Iamblichos was aware of a difference between thought expressed in symbols, and thought expressed in dialectic. Yet, each of these *forms* was a medium for the transmission of something *essential*, that is, philosophy. We have seen that this idea that mythology was the vehicle for early philosophers was a *topos* in the late antique world, and it is one which Julian shared. But for my thesis it has an important corollary:

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[46] When discussing the best introduction to philosophy, Iamblichos asks, what according to Pythagoras is the best introduction? Iamblichos' *Protrepticus* 1.1, p. 35. See also 1.21 where Herakles is said to rightly be the symbol of the Pythagoreans, because of his ceaseless labours.

[47] *De Vita Pythagorica* 12.58, and 23.102-105 [pp. 23 and 45-47 in Clark (1999)].

[48] Damascios *On the "Philebos"*, cited in Dillon (1973) pp. 100-101.

[49] O'Meara (1989) p. 3.

so far as we can tell, the Phoenician theology is never cited by Iamblichos or Julian as a theology marked by dialectic.

Part of the distinguishing feature of modern philosophy is the way that arguments are put forward and rebutted. A system of symbols, whether expressed in mythology or art or otherwise, does not do this. If Julian and Iamblichos have falsified the evidence concerning the Phoenicians, then they have done so cleverly, because Julian's references to the Phoenician theology always contain an element of the symbolic. Nowhere does Julian attempt to pass off dialectic or logical submissions as purely Phoenician.

There is one final matter to note before leaving the topic of Iamblichos and the Phoenicians: Iamblichos's theory of time. According to Sorabji's research, this was to the effect that Iamblichos distinguished not two different types of "times", but two different "nows", a higher and a lower "now". This "lower now" seems to be a plurality of "nows". This lower now flows, but the higher now is static, and is forever the same in form. As he concludes: "… the higher time is elevated above the sensible world and is not the sort of thing in connection with which talk of division and flow makes sense".[50] As we shall see in chapter 8, this bears a rough sort of similarity to a Phoenician concept of two durations associated with the sun (eternity and passing time). Because the similarity does not seem to be so close as to exclude coincidence, I shall not pursue it here.

IAMBLICHOS AND JULIAN

It is correctly recognized that Iamblichos' writings were a central influence upon Julian. There is a well known passage from Julian's *Letter to Priskos*, where Julian exhorts his correspondent to gather for him whatever of Iamblichos' works he can, and describes him as surpassed only by Pythagoras and Plato.[51] Yet, I think that Iamblichos' importance for Julian has been overstated. It is not my

[50] Sorabji (1983) pp. 37-39, citing p. 39.

[51] In Wright (1923), pp. 2-7. This passage is something of a friendly letter to an ardent admirer of Iamblichos. I do not think that this is meant to express a considered ranking. There is also an enthusiastic reference to Iamblichos in the letter to Libanius, 401B, also found in Wright (1923) 200-209. Julian's letters are replete with the most fulsome and almost exaggerated praise.

concern to minimize Iamblichos as an authority for the emperor, only to place that authority in its proper perspective, and to evaluate how reliable Iamblichos might be on Phoenician theology.

A preliminary point is that in the *Hymn to King Helios*, Julian cites Iamblichos only at 146A and 150D (the Edessa Pericope), and then at 157C and 158D in his conclusion. While these are important references, in the last two of which Julian refers his readers to Iamblichos for authoritative material, Julian cites him less often than he does Plato. It is worth noting that, so far as I can see, Julian does not name Iamblichos once in the *Hymn to the Mother of the Gods*, the oration which is closest in sense to the *Hymn to King Helios*. Bouffartigue has opined that this may be due to the fact that Iamblichos is much later than the established authorities such as Homer, Plato, and Aristotle, and hence of less authority.[52] As Bouffartigue twice notes, this is deceptive, for Iamblichos was clearly more important to Julian's philosophy than a mere count of incidence would suggest.[53]

Cumont was of the opinion that Iamblichos converted Julian to his own system of "transcendental heliolatry".[54] I doubt that it is proper to classify Iamblichos' influence as a conversion, because, as we have seen above, Julian felt a special relationship with the sun from his childhood.[55] This feeling was instrumental in developing the intellectual interests and convictions which were crystallized as the doctrines elaborated in the *Hymn to King Helios*. Further, Julian did not know Iamblichos personally. Iamblichos' ideas were disseminated to Julian at second and third hand, through people such as Aidesios of Pergamum, who had personally studied with Iamblichos,[56] and by the written word.

If Julian's views on the sun are set out for us at length in the *Hymn to King Helios*, there is much more doubt in characterizing Iamblichos' own views as we have nothing comparable from him on this topic. Was he basically a conduit for Syrian ideas, as Cumont proposes? For Cumont, Iamblichos' ideas are neither Egyptian nor Mesopotamian: they are strictly Syrian, and from

[52] Bouffartigue (1992) pp. 76-77.
[53] Bouffartigue (1992) pp. 77 and 277.
[54] Cumont (1909) p. 31.
[55] Especially *To the Cynic Herakleios* 228D-234C.
[56] Athanassiadi-Fowden (1981) p. 32; and Reale (1990) p. 421.

Syria this heliolatry spread to the *Chaldaean Oracles*.[57] I suggest that while we can not know beyond any doubt whether the Solar Pericope was sourced from Iamblichos, it most likely was. Further, if Julian did learn it from Iamblichos, Iamblichos can be considered to have been a reliable source in that respect. However, if I am correct that the Solar Pericope was originally embedded in a piece of poetry (perhaps a hymn or oracle), then even if it was employed by Iamblichos, it was most likely not penned by him, for there is no record that he ever wrote poetry. Iamblichos could, however, have found it and included it in a prose work, as Porphyry did with some oracles.

Even if Julian learnt of the Phoenician theology only from Iamblichos, a rationalization that Iamblichos falsely attributed his own views to the Phoenicians is not cogent, because there are so many other more central points at which he could (and, on such a view, would) have fabricated Phoenician authority. Was Iamblichos consciously dishonest? The possible example of pseudonymy in *On the Mysteries* aside, this has not been alleged, so far as I am aware, but he might have been the victim of his own principles, one of which seems to have been that the theurgic wisdom has been consistently handed on by those with esoteric understanding.[58] That is, he may have read other writers, and understood the religious concepts of other civilizations in ways which, so to speak, Platonized them. The same cautions would apply equally even if one were to speculate that Julian invented his "Phoenician theology" without recourse to Iamblichos.

One can overstate Iamblichos' influence upon Julian. For example, Iamblichos postulated two first principles. He was not followed in this by Julian, or—so far as we know—by other Neoplatonists,[59] although I suspect that at least some of his pupils must have subscribed to this doctrine.[60] This is a very important

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[57] Cumont (1909) pp. 2-3, 7 and 7 n. 1, 19 and 19 n. 2, and 21-22.

[58] This paragraph is not footnoted as I shall fully substantiate my assertions below.

[59] Dillon (1987) pp. 880-882.

[60] Interestingly, while one cannot demonstrate that Iamblichos' joint first principles were derived from ancient Phoenicia or Mesopotamia, there are two first principles in the cosmologies of Mochos (see chapter 11) and Philo: Baumgarten (1981) p. 96. It is also found in *Enuma Eliš*, tablet 1, lines 3-4, which itself may, in some ways, be indebted to a

distinction, going as it does to the basis of their philosophies. But once the second "One" is excluded, I do not think that there is a crucial distinction between Iamblichos' and Julian's systems of thought.

There is another possible difference, although it is not nearly so important. As we saw above, Julian considered Sokrates the founder of philosophy, while Iamblichos considered that this honor rightfully belonged to Pythagoras. Further, Iamblichos seems to have seen Plato as being "essentially" a Pythagorean.[61] However, in *To the Uneducated Cynics*, Julian argues that Iamblichos (in some passage or oral tradition which is now lost) was correct in saying that philosophy has a divine foundation. This divine source inspired all other philosophers: Pythagoras, Sokrates, Plato, and (I think we are meant to understand) the pagan philosophers who antedated even Herakles.[62] I suspect, on balance, that both "genealogies of philosophy" are rhetorical flourishes. I do not place any weight upon this point, mentioning it for the sake of completeness.

WHAT ACQUAINTANCE WITH SEMITIC CULTURE DID IAMBLICHOS AND PORPHYRY POSSESS?

Iamblichos and Porphyry wrote in Greek. While there is no evidence that Iamblichos knew any Semitic languages, there is evidence in respect of Porphyry, and this evidence is worth considering for two reasons. First, it would show as a general proposition that in the western Mediterranean, Neoplatonic philosophy was not necessarily isolated from local Semitic culture. Second, it would demonstrate that Porphyry specifically did not live in a world in which Greek culture had entirely displaced the older native culture. This is of interest, for as we saw above, Porphyry edited the oracle from which terms of the Semele Pericope were taken. In other words, the esteem for Phoenician culture expressed in that oracle might not simply be a conceit of persons to whom that culture was in fact lost.

Levantine legend of the battle of the deity Addu with a sea-monster: Malamat (1997) 313-315.

[61] Dillon (1973) p. 26.

[62] 187B-188C.

This raises an interesting question, for Millar is of the view that if Porphyry knew any language other than Greek, then it was Latin, for his home town Tyre was a *colonia*.[63] Millar concedes that what this civic status might have meant in terms of language "remains quite obscure", and notes adjustments to the Tyrian *constitution*. In terms of language, all that he can state is that: "Colonial status ought to have entailed the public use of Latin …",[64] but provides no authority for this. Millar cites Eusebius, speaking of certain writers, and saying:[65]

> τὰ καὶ ποιητῶν ἁπάντων καὶ λογογράφων πρεσβύτερα περιέχουσαι τό τε πιστὸν τῶν λόγων ἐπαγόμεναι ἀπὸ τῆς εἰσέτι δεῦρο ἐν ταῖς κατὰ Φοινίκην πόλεσί τε καὶ κώμαις κρατούσης τῶν θεῶν προσηγορίας τε καὶ ἱστορίας τῶν τε παρ᾽ ἑκάστοις ἐπιτελουμένων μυστηρίων

> They offer guarantees of their propositions from the appellations of the gods still prevailing to this day in the cities and villages of Phoenicia and the explanations of the mysteries celebrated among each people.[66]

Millar notes this does not prove that anything beyond the deties' names used were "of Semitic origin".[67] This is too narrow. First of all, just a little below this passage, Eusebius makes clear that he is speaking of a Phoenician theology: ἡ Φοινίκων θεολογία.[68] It will not therefore be a "Semitic" language at large, but Phoenician. Secondly, Eusebius is referring to a popular culture which has survived both in cities and villages, and not to activities taking place among the Roman ruling circles of the cities. This therefore explains why the sparse documentary evidence does not show the Phoenician language: it comes from the circles where Greek and Latin were used.

In their commentary on this text, Des Places and Sirinelli draw what is, I suggest, a more natural interpretation:

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[63] Millar (1997) p. 242.
[64] Millar (1997) p. 245.
[65] Eusebius, *Praeparatio Evangelica*, 1.10.55.
[66] Millar's translation: (1997) p. 248.
[67] Millar (1997) p. 248.
[68] Eusebius, *Praeparatio Evangelica*, 1.10.55.

> Il est possible que la religion phénicienne ait été un terrain de manoeuvres particulièrement favorable pour les allégoristes. … Eusèbe multiplie les précautions pour montrer que la religion phénicienne était, et est encore, ce qu'il vient de nous décrire …[69]

Millar queries the tendency to look for "oriental" elements in philosophers such as Porphyry, and use those influences as a foundation for interpretation.[70] But has Millar himself not assumed too much in stating, for instance, that the "intellectual character" of Philo of Byblos' work is "indisputably Greek", and combines with Euhemerism, elements drawn from Phoenician and Egyptian traditions? It suffices to note that Millar offers no evidence for his assertion that Philo drew on Egyptian traditions.[71] An acquaintance with ancient Phoenicia should have revealed that Phoenicia constantly, for over 2,000 years, adopted and naturalized Egyptian ideas and motifs. How, in short, can Millar be certain that Philo is not citing a Phoenician adaptation of Egyptian material?

Millar's arguments from the absence of evidence would have more force if we had abundant evidence for comparison, but we do not. Further, when evidence is forthcoming, Millar explains it away, and pleads that we lack the evidence to really know the truth of the matter. Thus, when he deals with Porphyry's own statement that in his native language he was called Malko (κατὰ μὲν πάτριον διάλεκτον Μάλκω κεκλημένω …), Millar asserts:

> … Porphyry's own testimony, when taken literally, reveals no more than that he knew 'Malchos' (derived from MLK) meant 'king', it does of course also show that he was aware of a *patrios dialektos*. There, however, our evidence stops. We do not know whether this *dialektos* was still spoken in Tyre …[72]

But the word καλέω means "call", Porphyry states that he was *called* this name according to the dialect of his fatherland. That is, the name which meant "king" was addressed to him in a specific context, a different *dialektos*. In Greek, a διάλεκτος could be either a language or a dialect, or simply a way of speaking. If some

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[69] Eusebius (1974) p. 323 (the critical apparatus at the back of the volume).

[70] Millar (1997) pp. 243-244.

[71] That Philo makes reference to Egyptian figures is not in doubt.

[72] Millar (1997) pp. 248-249.

Semitic language where MLK meant "king"—and Phoenician was one such language[73]—was not spoken, then why do we find the words πάτριον διάλεκτον, and not something such as "a word from (say) the Phoenician" or "which name signifies 'king' in (say) Phoenician"? If this Semitic language (whatever it was) was a dead language in Tyre, why would Porphyry call it a πάτριον διάλεκτον?[74]

One cannot deny that Porphyry learnt Greek from a young age. In his *Homeric Questions* he says that because of how he and others like him learnt Homer in "childhood instruction" (ἡμεῖς δὲ ἐκ τῆς παιδικῆς καταχήσεως) they tend not to reflect on what they read in him.[75] However, the simple but crucial point is that Porphyry's testimony is not neutral between Millar's position and the view that Porphyry must have understood a Semitic language. While it does not decisively prove that Porphyry did understand that language, it is surely more suggestive of that than it is of Millar's position that Porphyry knew no Phoenician. MLK is attested as a Phoenician name,[76] and is recorded in the Greek form 'Malchos.'[77] However, the form in the passage in question is not "Malchos" but "Malcho". It is impossible to know which Semitic language this is, but the onus is on anyone who wishes to affirm that Porphyry was not acquainted with a Semitic language, to demonstrate this.

The situation in Phoenicia was complex in Roman times. A people whom Strabo calls "Ituraeans and Arabs" overran the Phoenician coast in the first century BCE before being expelled.[78] Hoyland believes that these people, inhabiting Mount Lebanon, "even if originally of Arab origin, soon became substantially

[73] Krahmalkov (2000) p. 285, "MLK IV".

[74] The same considerations would apply to Aramaean, except that in that case, it would be the recent *patrios dialektos*.

[75] *The Homeric Questions* 2-3, from the introductory letter to Anatolios.

[76] Benz (1972) p. 138.

[77] Lancel (1995) pp. 111-112. This would indicate that the vocalisation "Malchos" was Punic if not Phoenician. Briquel-Chatonnet (1991) p. 14 asserts that "Malchos" is not a Phoenician vocalisation, but does not provide evidence.

[78] Strabo 16.2.18

assimilated to the prevailing Greco-Aramaean culture …”.[79] Hoyland does not even conjecture which language they spoke. So when it comes to the regular spoken tongues of Roman Phoenicia, we are in the dark. However, we do know that Phoenician *culture* was tenacious in this period.

Tyrian coinage did display motifs which were sometimes Hellenized. This occurred especially after the savage razing of Tyre by Alexander in July 332 BCE, when over 2,000 Tyrians were crucified. A coin of Caracalla (211-217 CE) refers, in Latin, to Tyre as being a colony. However, the designs on this very coin are traditionally Phoenician, and indeed it was a feature of not only Tyrian but also much other Phoenician coinage, that even in the Roman period, *colonia* or not, the ancient native gods and culture were honored.[80] The latest study of this aspect of Tyrian numismatics known to me observes that even in the time of Caracalla, Elagabalus, and Decius Trajan (249-251), Tyrian coins include depictions of murex shells, the Phoenician Koinon,[81] palm trees, and Astarte.[82] Then, in the reign of Valerian (253-60) there is attested a defiantly Tyrian and most un-Roman motif of two betyls with an olive growing between them.[83]

So despite the conquest by Greeks and then Romans, Phoenician motifs reappeared on coins, together with the use of Phoenician characters up to the first century BCE. In addition, a Greek figure might be combined with a distinctly Phoenician symbol such as the palm (probably the local conception of the tree of life), or if the obverse was Hellenistic in style, the reverse might show Astarte.[84] Hanson is surely correct to speak of "… the spirit and pride of a city that could continue so long against both odds

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[79] Hoyland (2001) p. 69. Hoyland does not, however, establish that there was a prevailing "Greco-Aramaean" culture.

[80] Jidejian (1969) p. 104.

[81] Possibly the council of Tyre, Sidon, and Arwad, which had established the city of Tripolis and met there.

[82] Hanson (1980) pp. 64-66. This is not to say that all designs are found for the coins of each reign. But the tendency of the coinage is clear.

[83] Hanson (1980) p. 66.

[84] Hanson (1980) pp. 12, 21, 23, and 24-27.

and competition".[85] Phoenician culture, had not perished in the time of Porphyry.

Further, and perhaps most importantly, Millar asserts that we do not know in which language Porphyry read the Bible. This is an issue which historians have often passed over. Millar notes that Porphyry excelled in his critical work on Daniel, showing it to be a late pseudonymous work. However, Millar goes on to make the naked declaration that there is no evidence that Porphyry knew Hebrew.[86] As one commentator, Charles, saw back in 1929, the fact that Porphyry stated that Daniel in fact referred to Antiochus having pitched his tent at Apedno "is due evidently to a misunderstanding of the Hebrew word א פ ד נ ו in 11:45".[87] That is, Porphyry misread this rare Hebrew word.

Daniel 11:45 is found in a "prophetic" passage which is often identified by the opening words of that passage, וּבְעֵת קֵץ "And at the time of the end …". From 11:40 through to 11:45, it tells how the king of the north will wage war like a juggernaut before his end. Just before his fate overtakes him, he pitches his tent. The relevant phrase, with our key word left untranslated, reads וְיִטַּע אָהֳלֵי אַפַּדְנוֹ "and he shall pitch his tent *ʾpdnw*". The Hebrew begins with an aleph, that is, a glottal stop which is vocalized either by the reader or by diacritical marks ("pointing" in Hebrew). This word comes from the Persian *apadana*, meaning "palace". As Collins observes, in this context, the Hebrew must mean "pavilion", and this is how it is usually translated (or as "palatial" or in some similar sense).[88]

Porphyry interpreted this passage as referring to the campaigns of Antiochus. While Porphyry's work has survived only in fragments, Jerome is clear on this point: "ponet tabernaculum suum in loco Apedno …".[89] All textual witnesses spell this place name with an alpha.[90] Now Porphyry cannot have made the error on the basis of the Septuagint, because the relevant word is not there. As stated, in Hebrew, Daniel 11:45 must read: "The tents of

[85] Hanson (1980) p. 68. Briquel-Chatonnet (1991) p. 9 even poses the question of whether the Hellenistic period saw a nationalistic reaction, reaffirming the native Phoenician culture.

[86] Millar (1997) p. 251.

[87] Charles (1929) p. 318.

[88] Collins (1993) p. 389.

[89] Jerome *In Danielem Prophetam*, *De Antichristo In Dan.*, 385.

[90] Critical apparatus to Jerome *In Danielem Prophetam*, p. 931.

his pavilion", אָהֳלֵי אַפַּדְנוֹ. However, the Septuagint read τότε, coming, Charles believes, as a result of confusion with the Aramaic אדין.[91] Further, while the ancient Christians used Theodotion's translation of Daniel in preference to the Septuagint,[92] Porphyry cannot have been mislead by Theodotion either, because although Theodotion also misread the Hebrew as a place name, he has vocalized our word with an epsilon, not an alpha, as εφαδανω.[93]

The only conclusion on this evidence can be that Charles was correct more than seventy years ago, to see Porphyry as having read the Hebrew. It would, one imagines, be inconceivable that Porphyry of Tyre could read Biblical Hebrew but not another Semitic language. I suggest that the likeliest language would be Phoenician, for Hebrew and Phoenician are very close indeed. Eighty-two percent of Phoenician words have the same meanings as their Hebrew cognates, and the syntax of the two languages is "very similar".[94] Further, recent research discloses that in this period Tyre was a metropolis for the Upper Galilee, and that the economy of that area was dominated by Tyrian coinage. Tyre was where the Galileans sold their goods.[95] There may have been any number of Tyrians with contacts who were Jewish and had Biblical Hebrew.

We do not possess a great deal of information about Porphyry's private life, and the bulk of even this is neutral as to whether he knew any Semitic languages. But there is an interesting passage in Eunapius, writing in the late fourth century. Eunapius states that Porphyry cast out from a bath a daemon which the locals of an unnamed town called "Kausatha": Καυσάθαν τοῦτον ἔλεγον οἱ ἐπιχώριοι.[96] The text does not say that the locals did not speak Latin or Greek, but the only evidence we have shows them using a Semitic language. The name would appear to be Aramaic or Syriac, as Barton suggests.[97] One cannot be dogmatic, and the

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[91] Charles (1929) p. 322.

[92] Collins (1993) pp. 3-4 notes that in this respect, the reading of Daniel was exceptional.

[93] Theodotion's text is, again exceptionally, given beneath the LXX in the Rahlfs edition, vol. 2.

[94] Young (1993) pp. 22-23.

[95] Hanson (1980) p. 53.

[96] Eunapius *Lives of the Philosophers*, 457.

[97] Cited in Wright's 1921 edition of Eunapius, p. 358, n. 2.

name may even be Phoenician, but the the final alpha of the nominative "Kausatha" is consistent with the marker of the "determined state". It seems that Porphyry, when he was not at Rome, moved in a culture where the locals spoke a Semitic language. While the name of a demon may have been preserved from an older or even a foreign tradition, it is nonetheless, a Semitic name.

Previously, I referred briefly to Lucian's reference to the use of Hebrew and Phoenician words, the century before, by Alexander of Abonoteichos in a mélange, meaningful only for its reference to Apollo and Ešmoun.[98] There seems little doubt that Phoenician did survive for some purposes, such as naming, and that certain people could read and write it: the coins show that.[99] Punic is known to have survived into the second half of the fifth century CE, and Phoenician is believed to have been spoken in the wine-growing areas of Cyprus into the fourth century CE.[100] Probably on the basis of the passage in Eusebius, Lipinski adds that Phoenician survived "sans doute aussi, dans les campagnes libanaises".[101] Further, a Phoenician name, "Servant of El-Hammon" is attested in Ehdin, in the mountains east of Tripoli, in an inscription datable to 589 CE.[102]

It is agreed that Porphyry's work *Against the Christians* applied standards of criticism to the text so high that they would not be matched until the nineteenth century. Of all the anti-Christian works of polemic, Porphyry's was considered the most

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[98] Lucian, *Alexander the False Prophet* 2 and 13; see also Turcan (1992) pp. 258-260. Briquel-Chatonnet (1991) p. 12 is unwilling to extrapolate that Phoenician could have been a vital tongue from this statement.

[99] Briquel-Chatonnet (1991) p. 10 n. 48, makes reference to Tyrian coinage bearing Phoenician letters in the Roman period, to be specific, from the reign of Gordian (238-244). She correctly notes that the use of these letters on coins will not evidence a living language. I would note that while the use of Phoenician letters is not sufficient evidence, if such usage supports one view, it is more likely to support the view that Phoenician was still a living language.

[100] E. Lipinski writing in *DCPP* pp. 255 and 275. Lipinski marshals his evidence from certain Acts of the martyrs and from Arnobius the Younger's *Commentary on the Psalms*.

[101] *DCPP* p. 255.

[102] Mouterde (1944-1946) pp. 53-55.

dangerous—by Christians.[103] It has generally, and I think correctly, been surmised that Porphyry had an advantage in his analysis because of his acquaintance with a Semitic language.

An article by Zadok adducing evidence for the ubiquity of Aramaic in Syria and the Levant in the first century CE was published in 1999.[104] However, Zadok did not prove, as he conjectures, that Phoenician had entirely died out as a spoken language. Not only does Zadok's evidence fall short of establishing this: as we saw, Millar points to evidence which would indicate that it had not. Yet, as a result of Zadok's work, we know that Aramaic was much more widely spoken than Millar asserted was possible. Given the evidence of Porphyry's reading of the Book of Daniel, and his autobiographical note, I think we may safely conclude that Porphyry understood a Semitic language, probably Phoenician, and could read Biblical Hebrew.

The chief flaw in Millar's historiography, as I see it, is that he works on the basis that absence of evidence is evidence of absence. In addition, he does not factor in the nature of the rule of Greece and Rome in Phoenicia, and the effect of their arrogation of cultural superiority, a belief they could support with arms.[105] Millar has not taken into account the effects of Greek prejudice. The entire distinction between Hellenes and "barbarians" was enshrined in the Greek language in that word "barbarian", which connotes "gibberish people" (and to a lesser extent in the word σόλοικος, another pejorative term).[106] The term βάρβαρος is thought to be onomatopoeic, but that is not certain.[107]

I would suggest that when the people whom the Greeks had conquered did not use their native language, this may mean not that the language had died, but that it was not used in contexts where our Greek language sources are likely to have encouraged, let alone recorded, its use. It is interesting to compare the position in respect of the Akkadian and Sumerian languages. Noting that these languages were still copied and understood into the Christian era, Geller concluded that it is likely that the cuneiform script

[103] Browning (1976) p. 54.

[104] Zadok (1999) *passim.*

[105] I have already referred to Coleman (1997) for evidence of these "conceits".

[106] Coleman (1995) p. 178.

[107] Woodard (1997) p. 41.

survived as long as the pagan temples of Mesopotamia did.[108] The example of Iamblichos the novelist (not to be confused with Iamblichos the philosopher) is particularly instructive. A scholiast to Photius is emphatic that Iamblichos was not a Greek-Syrian but a Syrian *simpliciter*. His native language was Syriac, but a tutor taught him Akkadian, and he later learnt Greek so well that he became known as a good rhetorician (and, we may note, a novelist, fragments of whose Greek language writings have survived).[109]

This shows just how dependent we are on odd pieces of information for our understanding of the Semitic cultures of the Seleucid world. It seems to me that in Phoenicia it was not Hellenization, but the spread of Christianity which ultimately lead to the demise of pagan Phoenician language and culture. Geller's comment on Mesopotamia is probably equally valid for Phoenicia: while the local temples survived, so did their language.[110] What do we know of the Hellenization of Phoenicia? Grainger is of the opinion that Hellenization was strongest in the six cities of Phoenicia, and first among these in terms of openess to the new influence, was Sidon. Grainger takes as examples of the situation outside of the cities, the shrine of Astarte at Wasta (between Sidon and Tyre) and the village of Umm el-Amed near Tyre. The shrine may have been quite ancient, but developed in the Ptolemaic period. Of this he writes:

> There are graffiti, and the cave is marked by triangles, presumably as a fertility symbol. Every dedicator has a Phoenician name, though one is Safaitic, … and another … is in Greek. This cave-shrine is in an area which was open to the full influence of passing Greeks, and later Romans, but it remains resolutely local, Phoenician and traditional.[111]

This is reminiscent of the foundation at Umm el-Amed. There the entire culture, inscriptions, buildings and pottery are

[108] Geller (1997) 44-47.

[109] Geller (1997) 50 and n. 28 translating the scholiast's note.

[110] Geller (1997) 53-56 notes other evidence for the survival of native cults in Syria throughout the third century CE and, at Edessa, even the very end of the fifth century CE.

[111] Grainger (1991) p. 78. Of Tyre, Grainger concludes that: "Tyre was almost as self-consciously Semitic as the Jewish Hasmonaean state". (p. 146) He points to the facts that Melqart remained its god, it continued relations with Carthage, and used Phoenician on its coins.

Phoenician, with the addition only of Rhodian amphorae.[112] The temple at Umm el-Amed continued Phoenician burial traditions, remembered its dead in Phoenician, and commemorated building extensions in the decade of 130 BCE in Phoenician.[113] Grainger is correct to surmise that Hellenization was a "desperately slow process", and the countryside remained Phoenician in culture and language.[114] It is in the Roman period that Grainger sees the final stages of Hellenization of the cities, possibly facilitated by the removal of Greek dominance.[115]

What we do not know is how far this process went in the cities. For example, as noted, the only evidence of the nature of popular religion in the cities would indicate that it was traditional.[116] As for the more sophisticated levels of religious thought, the intellectual Sidonian who argued with Pausanias was identified as a Phoenician, and was in polemic with Greek religion.[117] Neoplatonism had a foothold in Phoenicia, but as we have seen, it is at least arguable that this means that Neoplatonism was a Mediterranean, and not a purely Greek phenomenon. Although Christianity gained an early foothold in Phoenicia, many Phoenicians were pleased by Julian's reforms. Thus Frend, speaks of how "electric" Julian's restorations were to the "common people" who (even on Christian evidence) welcomed his reforms. He cites as one of two examples, the dedication by Phoenicians of an inscription to Julian.[118] Located in 1969 in the upper Jordan valley, and inscribed on local limestone it is only slightly damaged and relevantly reads:

> R[O]MANI ORBIS LIBERAT[ORI]
> TEMPLORVM
> [RE]STAVRATORI CVR
> [IA]RVM ET REI PVBLICAE
> RECREATORI BAR

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[112] Grainger (1991) pp. 80-82. Other commentators have noted that the layout of the temples of Umm el-Amed owes nothing to Greece: *DCPP* p. 485.

[113] Grainger (1991) p. 127.

[114] Grainger (1991) pp. 108-109.

[115] Grainger (1991) p. 185.

[116] This is found in Lucian's *De Dea Syra*, *passim*.

[117] See chapter 11 below.

[118] Frend (1984) p. 602.

BARORVM EXTINCTORI
D(OMINO) N(OSTRO) IOVLIANO …

13 … FOENICVM
[GEN]VS OB IMPET[RATA]
[BENEFICIA][119]

Of this inscription, and with especial reference to the dedication by the Phoenicians, Dietz observes "Eine konventionelle Bezeichnung ist das nicht", and—preferring the reading "genus" in line 14, in place of the suggested [SOC]IVS—concludes that the term "genus" must correspond here to the Greek ἔθνος.[120] Although the inscription is in Latin, this will not prove that Latin was widespread in the Jordan valley. The spelling of the emperor's name betrays the influence of Greek, "with which the local stonecutters were naturally more familiar than Latin".[121] It is rare to find inscriptional reference to Julian's restoration of temples. This, together with the "relative epigraphic abundance … in the provinces of this region" would suggest that the local enthusiasm for Julian and this measure was genuine.[122] Bowersock's arguments for dating the inscription to April or May 363 have some force, for he points out that in this inscription, one would expect the reference to barbarians to be to Eastern ones.[123]

However, I am not certain of the correctness of his proposal to read the word [COE]TVS in line 14, and thus a reference to the rulers of the Roman province of Phoenicia.[124] Bowersock refers to Deininger's work on regional parliaments to support the possibility of that reading, but there is actually little comfort there. Deininger refers to two inscriptions, one each from Cilicia and Cappadocia which refer to an ἀρχιερεῖς, and to some coins referring to the ΚΟΙΝΟΥ ΦΟΙΝΙΚΗΣ or the COENV PHOENICES with a depiction of the temple at Tyre. As Deininger observes there are so few references that we know next to nothing of it.[125] Further,

[119] Negev (1969) p. 170. I have restored [GEN]VS as suggested by Dietz (2000) p. 822.

[120] Dietz (2000) p. 822.

[121] Negev (1969) p. 171.

[122] Negev (1969) pp. 171 and 173.

[123] Bowersock (1978) pp. 123-124.

[124] Bowersock (1978) pp. 123-124.

[125] Deininger (1965) p. 88.

Bowersock is unaware of the slightly better evidence for an association of Phoenicians at Tripoli forming a "pan-Phoenician council", with its origins in the Persian period.[126]

The possibilities for speculation here are endless: did Tyre mint coins in which it effectively claimed to be pre-eminent in the council? Grainger notes that a rivalry between Sidon and Tyre was fought out on the faces of their coinage, with each declaring itself to be the "Metropolis" of the other, and Sidon even making this claim of Kambe (Carthage), which had been founded by Tyre.[127] What, if any, was the relation between the two councils? In the end, what we are left with is a damaged inscription, which so far as it can be read, points to people who as late as the time of Julian saw themselves as Phoenicians and as having a stake in a civilization saved from barbarians, and a religion in which restored temples were a cause for gratitude.

This part of the thesis had the aim of showing that reliable knowledge of the Phoenician religion may well have continued, and probably did continue, into the late antique world, and especially to Porphyry and Iamblichos. I think that has been done. If Porphyry could understand a Semitic langauge, and read Biblical Hebrew, then the chances that Phoenician philosophy and theology could surivive in some form, to be learned by his near contemporary Iamblichos, must be rated quite highly. To close this section, I observe that Fowden concludes: "Everything we know of Iamblichos suggests that his background was overwhelmingly Syrian".[128]

JULIAN'S OWN CONTRIBUTIONS

The most important of Julian's sources is, I consider, formed by his meditations upon his own life, and the conclusions he drew from these. There is a significant extent to which the material in the *Hymn to King Helios* is sourced in Julian's own spiritual experience and intellectual endeavors. To this effect, the opening paragraphs indicate that his own internal state of faith was of fundamental importance to him, and not only in the sense that our internal states are fundamental for all of us. Some may choose to be

[126] Markoe (2000) p. 203.
[127] Grainger (1991) p. 112.
[128] Fowden (1979) p. 84.

reticent about their own personal experiences, for any number of reasons. For example, writers may take the view that their own individual states are so subjective as to be meaningless or irrelevant to others. Julian, however, is prepared to say something about his own life, even if he is reticent where the mysteries are concerned. For Julian, his own history is important and pertinent to the wider world, because he was—he believed—selected by the gods to rule the Roman Empire and assist in the restoration of their worship.

However, he says little on this topic, perhaps because it would entail divulging matters learnt, or intimately derived from, mysteries or some initiatic tradition. The mysteries in question may or may not have been those of Mithras, although there is no doubt that he was a Mithraic initiate.[129] Julian then proceeds to give the moving, if perhaps elliptical, account of his lonely childhood. In the course of this, he relates how a "longing for the sunbeams of the god" (τῶν αὐγῶν τοῦ θεοῦ πόθος) possessed him. Julian clearly links this deep childhood experience with his present devotion to Helios. In fact, this entire passage seems to act also as an exhortation to all others who might sense a vocation to "the service of the master" (τῇ θεραπείᾳ τοῦ δεσπότου).[130]

In other words, Julian employs the authorities and sources mentioned below, even Iamblichos, in order to express a faith and a philosophy which he felt deeply. As we have seen for Julian, Iamblichos is to be esteemed to an extent otherwise reserved only for Pythagoras, Sokrates, and Plato, and perhaps Aristotle. Certainly, Julian esteemed Iamblichos over and above any of his own contemporaries.

Yet Julian was in many respects an independent thinker. In his *Hymn to the Mother of the Gods*, he says that he has heard Porphyry has written a treatise on a particular point, but he (i.e., Julian) has not read it as he has not come across it. He goes on to say that he himself knows "from his own house" that Attis, whom he identifies with Mind (νοῦς), has an all-creative function. Julian uses

[129] *Hymn to King Helios* 130C. See the note by Wright (1913a) p. 353, n. 2. But direct Mithraic influence in this work is minimized, or rather, eliminated in Smith (1995) pp. 142-159, and the works there cited which present the previous view.

[130] *Hymn to King Helios* 130C-131D.

a wry turn of words here, and while playful, stresses that this is his own thought.[131]

This is not to deny that Iamblichos' influence is ubiquitous in the *Hymn*. The only real question is which of Iamblichos' lost works did Julian avail himself of: the commentary on the *Chaldaean Oracles*, or the one we believe was titled "On the Gods", or—as Smith believes—both?[132] I maintain that whether Julian found the Solar Pericope in Iamblichos or not, both Julian and his sources can reasonably be considered to be reliable when it comes to such matters. To my mind, the best assessment of the question of Julian's use of sources, is Turcan's:

> Nourri de multiples textes, Julien a le sentiment de faire oeuvre originale en trouvant l'expression d'une synthèse qui met en forme et au clair la cohérence profonde d'éléments hétérogènes, graduellement sédimentés dans sa conscience d'intellectuel païen. Jamblique et les *Oracles chaldaïques* correspondent aux strates le plus récentes, le plus déterminantes aussi de sa culture théosophique. Des *Oracles*, au vrai, il ne cite expressément qu'une épiclèse du dieu solaire (ἕπτακις), chorège des planètes qui fait remonter les âmes au ciel, comme la Grande Mère ramène Attis à ses côtés pour en faire l'aurige de son char …[133]

So where are we up to? We have considered the terms of the Solar Pericope, and the other Phoenician Pericopes, in some detail. We have seen that the three which are found in the *Hymn to King Helios*, the Solar, the Aphrodite, and the Edessa Pericopes, together comprise unmistakeable evidence of a formidable "Phoenician" theology. We briefly noted some ideas relating the sun and the mind in ancient Greece and Rome, but nothing so connected as the Phoenician solar theology seems to have been. An analysis of Julian's Phoenician Pericopes also showed that by the "Phoenicians" Julian meant the same people that we do today. An examination of Julian's sources shows that he was not an unthinking copyist. He was able to take an independent attitude to all of his sources, and even when he subjected Homer to the

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[131] *Hymn to the Mother of the Gods* 161C.

[132] Smith (1995) p. 265 n. 23.

[133] Turcan (1996) pp. 397-398. The passage Turcan refers to is that from *Hymn to the Mother of the Gods* cited above, i.e., 172D-173A.

authority of Plato, he subordinated Plato to the *Chaldaean Oracles*, and yet he departed from their theology in certain respects.

The Phoenician language and religion were not moribund in the fourth century CE, even if one must concede that they were little in evidence, and that Hellenic culture held the limelight—even in Phoenicia. In particular, contrary to assertions otherwise, there is good reason to think that Porphyry could understand Phoenician and Hebrew. As for the more central figure of Iamblichos, our evidence for him is very limited. If he did develop the Phoenician theology which Julian applied, it has not survived in any of his writings. However, Iamblichos was a highly intelligent writer. While he had some sympathy for the Phoenicians, and saw them (together with the Egyptians) as a part of the ancient wisdom which Pythagoras accessed, there is nothing to suggest that he was unbalanced in his approach, or likely to create *ex nihilo* a "Phoenician theology". Unlike Porphyry, he exclusively used his Semitic name, and lived almost all of his life in Syria. The notion that he had access to Phoenician religious materials is not at all unlikely, and even on Julian's evidence alone, I would be inclined to accept the general reliability of his Phoenician theology. The word "theology" is not entirely happy, but it will have to serve. The fact that these ideas are transmitted to us by a writer like Iamblichos tends to support the contention to which I shall return, that we are dealing here with a cluster of ideas which one could describe as "spirituality", that is, an inner approach to the divine ground.

However, this does not answer one crucial question. If some Phoenician theologians did configure this theology, when did they do so? Are there traces of these ideas, or even of related ideas, in surviving Phoenician material? This leads us to the second half of this thesis: who were the Phoenicians and what do we know of their "theology"?

CHAPTER 6
THE PHOENICIANS

The Phoenicians are often said to have been the people who inhabited, between about 1000 and 332 BC, the coastal plains centered around modern Lebanon. Today, it is not seriously contested that there was a significant element of continuity between the histories of the coastal cities as disclosed before the Iron Age and after. That is, one cannot find any objective dividing line in the history of the Phoenician cities (Arwad, Byblos, Beirut, Sidon, and Tyre) before and after the Iron Age. A recent study of the Canaanites categorically states that the Phoenicians: "were no more or less than 'latter-day Canaanites' … (and that) all of the characteristics that made the Phoenicians renowned were already present in the Canaanite culture of the preceding Middle and Late Bronze Ages".[1] Markoe introduced his recent monograph *Phoenicians* thus:

> The following presentation will focus on the continuity in tradition that characterized Phoenician history over a period of more than 1200 years, from the beginning of the Late Bronze Age (c. 1550 BC)—when the Phoenician cities (with the exception of Byblos) first emerge as urban entities—to the start of the Hellenistic period around 300 BC. In this respect, the volume represents a departure from earlier studies, which treat Phoenician culture as an Early Iron Age phenomenon that coalesced at the start of the first millennium BC … From all archaeological indications, the transition from the Late Bronze to the Early Iron Age along the Phoenician coast was not accompanied by abrupt or radical change in population make-up or political organization. … For all intents and purposes, the Phoenician cities of the Iron Age—from Tyre north to Arwad—were the direct descendants of their Canaanite precursors.[2]

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[1] Tubb (1998) p. 140. On the same page, Tubb adds that the Phoenicians did not "derive" anything from the Canaanites—they *were* the Canaanites.

[2] Markoe (2000) pp. 11-12.

There was not a rupture in the Iron Age at which "Phoenicia" in some meaningful sense replaced and perhaps even displaced "Canaan". Neither do I see any reason to restrict the term "Phoenician" to the Iron Age, if only for convenience. It seems to me to be preferable to employ the terms "Canaan" and "Canaanite" for the land and people to the south, in present day Israel. The critical point is to be clear and precise, and to identify and describe the continuities and discontinuities. By reference to time schemes such as the following, prepared by Markoe, and based partly upon pottery, the Phoenicians can be integrated into the six millennia of the region's history:

Chalcolithic	4500(?)-3100
Early Bronze	3100-2000
Middle Bronze	2000-1550
Late Bronze I	1550-1400
Late Bronze II	1400-1200/1150
Iron I	1200/1150-1000
Iron II	1000-586
Iron III (Neo-Babylonian)	586-538
Persian	538-332
Hellenistic	332-64/3 BCE
Roman	64 BCE-330 CE
Byzantine	330-636.[3]

As stated, to evaluate Julian's remarks about the Phoenicians, we need to have an understanding of who "the Phoenicians" were both to Julian and in themselves. While he is clearly referring to theologians, to which era is he referring? What are the borders—in space and time—of Julian's "Phoenicia"?

"PHOENICIA" AS A DIVISION WITHIN THE GREEK MEDITERRANEAN

The difficulties in pinpointing a people denoted by the term "Phoenician" are notorious. Aubet considers the various theories, ancient and modern, of the etymology of the term "Phoenicia" and its derivatives, and concludes:

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[3] Markoe (2000) p. 207; the last two entries are supplements from Baramki (1961) p. 71.

> … all this indicates the difficulties the Greek world found in drawing up an ethno-political definition of the Phoenicians: a people without a state, without territory and without political unity.[4]

We shall often see that the history of Phoenicia has been understood with reference to the history of Greece. It has been noted, too, that Phoenician history is sometimes considered in tandem with that of Israel.[5] Of the two tendencies, there is no doubt that it is the Greek perspective which most overshadows Phoenician history. It is hardly an exaggeration to say that the history of the eastern Mediterranean has been written as a chapter in the narrative of Greece, and the Phoenicians have been studied through Hellenic spectacles.[6] Although scholarship has rendered that perspective indefensible, the old frameworks and assumptions still persist, especially amongst those who are not primarily historians of Phoenicia and other cultures of Western Asia. Elayi and Sapin are of the opinion that: "… Phoenician studies … are striving today, with difficulty, to gain their autonomy: … studies on the Phoenicians of Phoenicia are not yet really liberated",[7] and "the idea of the superiority of Hellenism is always latent in the present work of some Hellenists, in relation to Transeuphratene".[8]

Naccache observes that the modern definition of "Phoenician" does not "allow us either to separate those 'Phoenicians' from their contemporaries of other ethnicities, nor to identify their supposed ancestors or heirs".[9] The term "Phoenicia" was variously used in imperial Rome. For example, it referred to

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[4] Aubet (2001) p. 9. The etymological discussion commences at p. 6.

[5] Garbini (1978) p. 28.

[6] Semmler (2002) pp. 98-99, criticizes scholars for misinterpreting Phoenician settlement in Spain by reference to inappropriate Greek models.

[7] Elayi and Sapin (1998) p. 30. At p. 31 they refer again to Hellenocentrism's harmful effect on Transeuphratene studies in modern scholarship, and note that it probably stems from J. G. Droysen's *History of Alexander the Great*.

[8] Elayi and Sapin (1998) p. 32.

[9] Naccache (1996a) p. 4.

the province Syria Phoenice which Septimius Severus established together with that of Coele Syria.[10]

There is a modern controversy as to how far Phoenicia was Hellenized and Romanized. Ball argues, in a work which seeks in many ways to answer the earlier work of Millar, that historians have underestimated both the extent to which the East remained Semitic, and the superficiality of its "classicism". Thus, Ball points out that Rome did not found any new cities in the East, and concludes:

> Perhaps nothing demonstrates more thoroughly the essential shallowness of 'Roman' cities than the rapidity by which their Greek names reverted to the older Semitic ones on the Arab conquest of the seventh century. Philadelphia reverted to Amman … Epiphania to Hama, Beroea to Aleppo, Hierapolis to Mambij …[11]

This view seems to be in the ascendant, and, I suggest, rightly so. In chapter 5 I dealt with Millar's views about the survival of Phoenician as a living language in Porphyry's youth, which was spent in Tyre. Zadok, in an extensive study, noted that even in the first century BCE, after the East was supposedly "Hellenized", the people of Syria were known to refer to themselves still as "Arameans". Zadok concludes that the Aramaic-speaking peoples ceased to call themselves "Arameans" only after the almost complete triumph of Christianity in the area. By that time, "Aramean" had become a pejorative term, connoting "an Aramaic-speaking pagan".[12]

That Phoenician culture and theological ideas may have been circulating in the fourth century CE, and been known to be Phoenician in origin, is by no means impossible. Phoenician self-consciousness seems to have been tenacious.[13] A tenth century

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[10] Ball (2000) pp. 18 and 404. Severus was born in 145 CE at Lepcis Magna in North Africa. Lepcis was originally a Tyrian colony, and in Severus' day had not forgotten its mother city. Severus spoke Latin with a Punic accent, and apparently his sister never learned Latin at all. The sources tell us that his skin was darker than that of the Italians, but some modern historians doubt this. Whatever his first tongue, he was well read in Greek and Latin literature. See Grant (1995) pp. 7-8, 13, and 93 n. 2.

[11] Ball (2000) p. 149.

[12] Zadok (2000) p. 270.

[13] This topic was touched upon above.

Arabic work provides a paragraph on ancient Phoenician religion. Some of it appears to be quite accurate, and none of it is known to be otherwise. It is particularly impressive that it knows of the deity Kothar, and gives his name accurately.[14]

PHOENICIA AND GREECE

When investigating whether Julian attributes ideas from classical philosophy to the Phoenicians, an intriguing point emerges: the issue of Phoenician influence upon Greece. We tend to forget that the Greeks conquered Phoenicia, and that when the Romans conquered the area, they arrived already under the cultural spell of Greece. History has been written by the victors: did they, then, understate the impact of Phoenicia upon the classical world? And when we consider that world, do we mistake the common use of the Greek language for the complete dominance of Greek thought and thinkers?

The more one studies the Hellenistic and Roman Mediterranean, the more it seems that it came to have an international intellectual culture, in which influences and stimuli were moving in every direction between the ancient cities. The idea that ancient philosophy had to have originated in one distinct culture from which it spread is described by Preus as the "point origin fallacy".[15] Preus states:

> Ancient Greek philosophy is, for the most part, a cultural product of the eastern Mediterranean. It was produced by people living in what is now southern Italy … and what is now Greece, but also and importantly the lands which are now Turkey, Syria, Iraq, Lebanon, Israel, Egypt and Libya. Hellenic and Hellenistic philosophical traditions are at least as much a part of the cultural heritage of Africa and Asia as they are of the cultural heritage of Europe. Ancient Greek philosophy is a *Near Eastern* cultural phenomenon, and belongs to the same larger culture as ancient Egypt, the Hebrews of the Bible, Phoenicia and Carthage, Babylonia and Chaldaean astronomy, and the Persian Magi.[16]

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[14] Aggoula (1990) esp. pp. 1, 5 and 7.
[15] Preus (1992) p. 13.
[16] Preus (1992) p. 15.

The alphabet is the salient of Phoenician influence on Greece. As Burkert points out, the Greeks accepted not only the letters' forms, but also the techniques for teaching and learning these forms.[17] But there are other instances.[18] It may be that aspects of Greek sport, athletic games and stadiums, originated in Phoenicia. Boutros wrote a monograph setting out this theory, and pointing to the stadium recently excavated at Amrit, the Greek Marathos. This town, which lay under the jurisdiction of Arwad is known at least from the time of the Late Bronze Age.[19] The stadium of Amrit seems to date back to the fifteenth century BCE.[20] Treating of other examples, Sapin and Elayi state:

> In the field of Phoenician art … we continue to annex to the Greek cultural patrimony the genuine masterpieces discovered in Phoenicia, under the pretext that the Phoenician artists were incapable of being their authors; it has been admitted more recently, however, that the marble sarcophagi were manufactured by Phoenician sculptors, and scholars are beginning to question how well-founded is the attribution of the superb Sidonian architectural sarcophagi to the Greek patrimony. To take an example in another field, it has been thought for a long time that Alexander was at the origin of the transformation of the town planning of Near Eastern towns. The invention of a well ordered plan, with streets cutting at a right angle, could only be according to this perspective, a Greek invention, and was traditionally attributed to Hippodamus of Milet. Now it is just being discovered that the supposed Greek models are later than the development of the 'Hippodamian' plan in certain Near Eastern sites such as Dor.[21]

The association of the Phoenician Kadmos with Greece and Thebes is known from Greek legend,[22] and it is recognized that the

[17] Burkert (1992) pp. 28-29.

[18] *DCPP* pp. 144-145, under *Égée*.

[19] *DCPP* p. 27.

[20] Boutros (1981) p. 57. I have not seen a single scholarly critique of Boutros' work.

[21] Elayi and Sapin (1998) p. 32.

[22] Edwards (1979) *passim*. There is some contention about this issue, but "Kadmos" and "Europa" fit together as Phoenician words for "West" and "East", and do not have plausible Greek etymologies.

Kabeiroi were originally West Semitic.[23] Boutros has published reasons for seeing Elis in Greece as derived from the name of the deity "El", and thus being the "land of El".[24] In support, he notes that on other occasions the Greeks hellenized Semitic words by adding the suffix "*is*" to the root, for example, *Adon* became *Adonis*. Burkert notes that it is "seldom mentioned" that more Middle Eastern bronzes had been located at Olympia (in Elis) than throughout all the Middle Eastern sites.[25] This is not the only evidence of Phoenician religious influence upon Greece. While the topic is controversial, there cannot be any realistic doubt that the Adonis cult was Phoenician in origin.[26] The Phoenicians also conducted certain industries in Greece, for example, they manufactured perfume in Rhodes at some point from the eighth century BCE.[27]

There is evidence of direct Phoenician influence upon the Etruscans, especially at Pyrgi.[28] The inscription of Thebarie Velanus[29] could show the influence either of the close relations which subsisted between Carthage and Etruria, or else the influence of Phoenicia. The fact of powerful Punic cultural impact in Etruria is clear. There seems also to have been Phoenician influence, for while the inscription at issue is based on an Etruscan exemplar, the fact that it was rendered into Phoenician at all is significant.[30]

It has been argued that the influence of the Phoenicians in Italy was not limited to Etruria. Heurgon observed:

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[23] See for example, Burkert (1992) p. 153 n. 3. Some scholars see the Kabeiroi as Anatolian, and there may have been Anatolian aspects of the cult in Samothrace. However, Kadmos was identified with Kadmilos (one of the Kabeiroi) and they are attested in Beirut coinage: *DCPP* p. 86 and Edwards (1979) pp. 29-30 and 37. It is difficult to know which name was used first, and thus assimilated to the other.

[24] Boutros (1981) p. 7.

[25] Burkert (1992) p. 4.

[26] *DCPP* p. 6.

[27] Burkert (1992) pp. 16-17.

[28] A brief overview of the Phoenician and Punic connections with the Etruscans can be found in Moscati (1988), in a chapter by E. Acquaro, especially at pp. 611-613. The Pyrgi inscription is dealt with in more depth in chapter 9 of this thesis.

[29] This is quoted and discussed in chapter 9.

[30] Guzzo (1995) has a good general discussion.

> Among the various factors which contributed to the making of Italic civilization in the archaic age, Phoenician and Punic influences seem now to be more willingly recognized than in a not very remote past … (when two scholars) trumpeted "the necessity of advocating the rights of Europe against the claims of Asia".[31]

There was a sixth century BCE temple of Herakles (Melqart) in the Ara Maxima, of Eastern inspiration. The question is, without any Phoenician inscriptions from Rome, was it directly Phoenician, or are we seeing a Cypriote influence acting as a conduit for the cult of a Phoenician deity?[32]

Other borrowings are less apparent. We have so little surviving information about Phoenicia that even when a Phoenician origin seems plausible, no one can say whether the parent culture was in fact Phoenician, Ugaritic, or perhaps something else. An example of this difficulty can be found in the recent and well argued derivation of the Greek terms μεροψ and Τιταν from Semitic **rp*ʾ and *ditanu*, respectively.[33]

The literature concerning Western Asian influence on Greece is increasing. There is evidence that some Greeks, on some occasions, deliberately denied or limited the Western Asian contribution to Greece. Consider this example: in speaking of some Greeks whom he names the Heliadai, autochthonous to Rhodes,[34] Diodoros of Sicily says that some of these slew their eldest brother, Tenages. The fratricides then fled in every direction. One, Aktis, sailed to Egypt where he founded Heliopolis. Diodoros continues:[35]

> οἱ δ᾽ Αἰγύπτιοι ἔμαθον παρ᾽ αὐτοῦ τὰ περὶ τὴν ἀστρολγίαν θεωρήματα
>
> The Egyptians learnt from him the theories pertaining to astronomy.

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[31] Heurgon (1966) p. 1. Pages 1-3 of this article are instructive, referring even to a putative Phoenician colony on the banks of the Tiber.

[32] *DCPP* p. 377, and the chapter "Mondes étrusque et italique" by M. G. Amadasi Guzzo in Krings (1995) pp. 663-673.

[33] Annus (1999) *passim*. This was anticipated, and is supported by the data marshalled in Clifford (1972) pp. 33, 60 and 135-136.

[34] See the "myth" and the whole elaborate story in 5.56.

[35] Didoros Sikulos 5.57.2.

Diodoros relates that after a flood had destroyed most of humanity, and its monuments:[36]

> οἱ Αἰγύπτιοι καιρὸν εὔθετον λαβόντες ἐξιδιοποιήσαντο τὰ περὶ τῆς ἀστρολογίας, καὶ τῶν Ἑλλήνων διὰ τὴν ἄγνοιαν μηκέτι τῶν γραμμάτων ἀντιποιουμένων ἐνίσχυσεν ὡς αὐτοὶ πρῶτοι ἄστρων εὕρεσιν ἐποιήσαντο
>
> The Egyptians taking (advantage of) the fitting moment, appropriated the matters concerning astrology, and (as) the Greeks through ignorance, no longer laid claim to letters, they (i.e., the Egyptians) could maintain that they had been the first to discover the stars.

This passage harks back to the *Timaios*, where Plato states that an old Egyptian priest told Solon that the Greeks "are children", for they have forgotten that there was more than one flood. These floods destroyed the Greek collective memory, a fate which the Egyptians do not share because living in a rainless land they do not suffer from these culture-destroying floods.[37] Athena had founded Athens 9,000 years previously, and the Athenians were a great culture long before the rise of Egypt.[38] Diodoros goes on to say that the Athenians even founded Sais, but, once again, later suffered from post-diluvian amnesia. The same is said to be true for writing: it was not invented by Kadmos or any Phoenician, rather, all the Phoenicians did was prettify the form.[39]

A full scale exploration of this theme in the Greek world would necessitate a wide-ranging enquiry, including, but not limited to writers like Plutarch and Josephus, presenting two very different aspects of this theme and its working out in the Mediterranean world. There is no doubt at all that after Alexander there was considerable Greek influence upon ancient Phoenicia. However,

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[36] Didoros Sikulos 5.57.4.

[37] Oldfather, editing Diodoros, says of this tale that "the counter claims of the Greeks are empty boasting" (vol. III, pp. 252-253).

[38] *Timaios* 21e-25d.

[39] Didoros Sikulos 5.57.5-74.1. Sacks (1990) pp. 62-66 contends that Diodoros is fairly evenhanded as between Eastern and Western contributions to culture, but he does not consider these passages. Although Diodorus is, in many respects, more sympathetic to "barbarian" culture than other Greek language writers of his time, as we have seen, there are limitations to this.

this tendency to offer Hellenic origins must also be borne in mind when discussing whether philosophical ideas attributed to Phoenicia must have come from Greece. This is a contemporary issue. One recently published example is that of Parmenides' unacknowledged cribbing from Babylon (although this was almost certainly not a direct borrowing).[40]

The story as we have it today is that philosophy began with the Greeks, and Greek philosophy began with Thales (624?-545?). Yet Diogenes Laertios knew that some maintained that philosophy began ἀπὸ βαρβάρων, "among the barbarians". These people observe, *inter alia*, that Mochos was a Phoenician.[41] Diogenes Laertios mentions some of these theories, and it must be said that they are outlandish in many respects. However, Diogenes Laertios outdoes them all. The trouble with these people, he asserts, is that they forget that all of these achievements began with the Greeks and not the barbarians, for not only philosophy but the entire human race (sic) began with the Greeks.[42] After further such remarks, Diogenes Laertios declares that philosophy has a double origin: with Pythagoras and with Anaximander the pupil of Thales.[43]

Diogenes Laertios' first biography is that of Thales. Diogenes notes that several early authors said that Thales was a Phoenician who had fled to Miletos from Phoenicia. However, Diogenes also reports that most writers say that he was Milesian.[44] We may never know the truth of this, but it is difficult to see how the idea that he was Phoenician could have started if it was untrue. It is simply not the sort of fiction one can imagine Greek writers contriving. The author of a recent study of the historical basis of the Thales legend stated that in that essay, his "polemical edge" was "deliberate", and was:

> … directed against a double game I find played over this terrain: scholars claiming, when confronted with confuting evidence, to find the "Greek Miracle" an overstatement, while continuing to pass it off on generation, after generation of

[40] Kingsley (1995) pp. 392-393.
[41] Diogenes Laertios 1.1.
[42] Diogenes Laertios 1.3.
[43] Diogenes Laertios 1.13.
[44] Diogenes Laertios 1.22.

> undergraduate students via the 20-, 30-, 50-, and 100-year old standard works through which it was originally propounded.[45]

Greene's subsequent essay, "Thales and the Halys", observed that Thales himself was a Greek-speaker from Miletos in Asia Minor, and of Phoenician ancestry. Miletos was only three and a half days from Egypt, by boat. This is significant, as his effort in diverting the Halys River for Cambyses probably used the sort of know-how available in Saite Egypt, when they had begun to rebuild the Red Sea canal. As Greene's research showed, Thales' legend was probably historical and based upon his understanding of water:

> He navigated across it, he moved it, he measured distances across it. He speculated on the causes of the Nile flood. He experienced water as a means of transportation, as a source of wealth (he knew to corner all the olive presses because it had *rained* a lot), and as an elemental substance, capable of a variety of forms, ubiquitous, but lacking any primary character; colourless, odourless, tasteless, essential for life.[46]

Some related comments: first, this illustrates how the Hellenocentric view of the ancient world which prevailed among scholars is breaking down.[47] Secondly, I am not suggesting that somehow Thales represented "Phoenician" thought. His example, mixing Greek language, Phoenician ancestry, and studies in Miletos and Egypt shows how naïve it would be to replace a Hellenocentric view with one centered on Phoenicia. The ancient world was far too complex for such oversimplification. This is the flaw in Lloyd's remarks on Thales: he simply assumes that Thales is Greek and represents Greek thought.[48] As an example of how subtle the questions can be, consider Philostratos' statement that there is a resemblance between the philosophical arts of the sophists and the

[45] Greene (1992) p. xvi.

[46] Greene (1992) p. 105, but see *passim* for the supporting arguments.

[47] Coleman (1995) p. 175, states: "Unfortunately, many Greek attitudes were adopted by the Romans, along with the word 'barbarian', and subsequently came to play a major role in shaping modern European and American prejudices against 'non-Western' peoples. The stereotype of the 'barbarian' … still plays a harmful role in 'Western' attitudes toward other peoples".

[48] Lloyd (1982) pp. 285-287.

"prophetic" (μαντικός) art of the Egyptians, Chaldeans, and Hindus.[49]

Plato, we have seen, disseminated the idea that the Greeks had forgotten that they had once created civilization. But Kingsley takes seriously the tradition that Plato himself was quite interested in the ideas of the Magi.[50] This raises the question of the extent to which Plato himself advocated the doctrines (one might say dogmas) set out in the *Timaios.* In chapter 10 I note the tradition, apparently sourced in Posidonios, that the Phoenician Mochos invented the theory of atoms which was associated with Demokritos and Epikouros. Diogenes Laertios says of Demokritos: οὗτος μάγων τινῶν διήκουσε καὶ Χαλδαίων, and moreover, that Demokritos stated that Anaxagoras' views of the sun and moon had been stolen from "antiquity". The verb used is ὑφαιρῶ—to take from under, underhandedly.[51] Was Demokritos alert to the origins of Anaxagoras' teachings because he (Demokritos) was himself acquainted with Asian ideas?

We have, then, untidy ends in the otherwise neat story of the Greek origin of philosophy. It seems to me that the meager evidence suggests that analytic philosophy began with currents of thought in Western Asia, which, *together* with developments stimulated by these in Greece, eventually became what we know as philosophy. One can demonstrate that at least among some Greeks, there was a definite bias against acknowledging the Phoenician contribution to their culture (and that of Egypt, too), and that some cultural elements, originally foreign, were given a spurious Greek ancestry. That bias was not always in evidence to the same degree among other Greek writers. Indeed, some, such as Herodotos, seem to have been relatively free of it. The existence of this bias warrants care when tracing the attested and gradual development of philosophy.

It seems then, that Julian, in citing the Solar Pericope from the stock of Phoenician ideas, was continuing a tradition which was already 1,000 years old at the time. However, Julian acknowledged his sources.

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[49] Philostratos *Lives of the Sophists* 480.

[50] Kingsley (1993) *passim.*

[51] Diogenes Laertios 9.34.

CHAPTER 7
THE SUN GODDESS OF UGARIT

It is not necessary to undertake a full scale review of religion in Ugarit in order to provide some context to the Solar Pericope. However, it is necessary to undertake at least a sketch of solar religion in Ugarit and Phoenicia, to study what connections if any may subsist between them, and to examine certain notions which are attested in Ugarit and seem to anticipate ideas attested later in Phoenicia. This also entails a brief discussion of the topic of continuity between Ugarit and Phoenicia.

Excavations at the port of Ugarit have found no fewer than 20 occupation levels. These date from the early Neolithic era (ca. 6500-6000 BCE) down to a Roman occupation of the first or second century CE.[1] Dietrich is of the view that the king list, naming 36 monarchs, probably extends back to around 2150 BCE.[2] The city was dominated by the temple of Baal on its acropolis. Both Ugarit and Ras Ibn Hani (once an island, and effectively a satellite of Ugarit) were destroyed by the Sea Peoples, probably at the end of the thirteenth century BCE.[3] However, some of Ugarit's literature has been preserved to be excavated because at some juncture—it would seem to be the mid-fourteenth century BCE—the Ugaritians began using clay tablets to record some of the writing which had previously been written on papyrus or bark.[4]

The question of religion at Ugarit is still, in very many respects, an open one. The considerable scholarly output of the last 70 years has raised many issues, and though certain matters can be taken as established, there is still scope for radical questioning of the fundamental issues. For example, the early identification of a certain Ugaritic temple as a temple of Dagon has now been put in doubt.[5] It seems that while we can identify elements of the cult, religion, and even perhaps fragments of the spirituality of Ugarit,

[1] Curtis (1999) p. 10.
[2] Dietrich (1996) p. 34.
[3] Curtis (1999) pp. 14 and 22-26.
[4] Dietrich (1996) pp. 34-38.
[5] Crowell (2001) p. 44, and the works cited there.

we do not yet have a reliable overview of the whole. While we are exceedingly fortunate that some of the epics have survived, there is still an unresolved enigma: did these comprise an "official" theology or set of myths? Were they the work of a single writer who may have been something of a maverick?

It is clear that Ugaritic religion, or the religions of Ugarit, incorporated many diverse elements in disparate languages and from assorted cultures: native Ugaritic, Mesopotamian (both Akkadian and Sumerian), Hurrian, and perhaps even more. Ugaritic religion can seem to be a patchwork. For example, del Olmo Lete writes:

> Canaanite-Ugaritic mythology is thus a special synthesis, different from those known in other parts of the ancient Near East and determined by specific geographic and social factors: a coastal location, a dependence on rain, and the monarchic and feudal organization of the state. However, this dependence on the actual situation makes it unfinished and incomplete as a reflection of the Canaanite religious universe, beyond the process of proclaiming Baʿlu as 'king of the gods'.[6]

This, it appears to me, is correct.[7] However, I think that we can go further and identify four points which seem characteristic of Ugaritic religion as a whole. These are:

(a) A large pantheon with a hierarchy amongst the deities. It appears that the cult of the deified ancestors was of central importance. While *ilib* "divine father/ancestor" heads one of the god lists, this deity, if it is a proper deity and not merely a sort of abstract or shorthand for the entire cult of the dead, does not feature under its own name;[8]

(b) The relationship between this world and the divine dimension is complex yet intimate. It is complex in that while deities operate on a vast cosmic scale, natural

[6] del Olmo Lete (1999) pp. 53-54. See also p. 74 where he argues that the chief "join" in Ugaritc religion is between an Amorite pantheon (from whence comes Daganu) and a Canaanite one, contributing Ilu.

[7] For similar comments see Miller (1987) pp. 53-54.

[8] del Olmo Lete (1999) pp. 74-80; Tsumura (1993) p. 40.

phenomena such as river and sea[9] and abstract notions such as death are deified (or perhaps more accurately, personified as deities). It is intimate in that deities are often associated with particular places (e.g., Mount Ṣapon)[10] and are depicted in literature as interacting with the king. Further, ritual and prayer are joined in praxis.[11]

(c) *Cycles* and *repetition* seem to be important. These cycles include both the specific events in a cycle (such as death), and the overall process (the return from death). There is no guarantee that anyone will find happiness in these cycles, hence the tragedy of the Aqhat legend. But there is some sort of afterlife, at least for the deified kings. A person's state in the afterlife is better for having someone to make ritual offerings.

(d) The Ugaritic religion was *international* in a way perhaps not expected in a second millennium BCE civilization. Naccache has, I think, soundly demonstrated that Ilu's home was in the northern Mount Lebanon range.[12] The deity Kothar-wa-Ḫasis comes from both Memphis and Crete.[13] Examples can be multiplied.

(e) The above four elements are all brought together in the services, ceremonies and feasts of the Ugaritic ritual. From the libations poured to the family ancestors through to large scale royal rites spread over several days, we receive the impression that Ugaritic life was saturated with ritual.

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[9] These are well-known from the Baal Cycle, but "earth" is a deity in one list, and "heaven" has been restored alongside it, at a lacuna. *Ugaritica V* p. 321. The editor provides no note for this.

[10] del Olmo Lete (1999) p. 80.

[11] Miller (1987) p. 62, "… divine and human realms pattern each other in the important sphere of sacrifice".

[12] Naccache (1996b).

[13] Or possibly Egypt and Crete: see the text of the Baal Cycle, 1. 1. 3. 1 and Wyatt's note 20, at Wyatt (1998) p. 43.

ŠAPŠU

The Phoenician-Punic term for the solar deity is *šmš*, as opposed to the Ugaritic, *špš*, which developed from *šmš*. Akkadian transcriptions provide Ša-ap-šu for the Ugaritic name špš.[14] Bonnet and Lipinski share the opinion that a middle term **šmpš* was possible. Lipinski speculates that the "p" was added as "an occlusive of transition" because the "m" was followed by the sibilant "sh", a development also known when Greek speakers came in contact with Semitic speaking people. As in Bonnet's reconstruction, the "m" was then lost from Ugaritic.[15]

With regard to gender, Lipinski contends that originally the Semitic sun deity was female, pointing to the Ugaritic and South Arabian evidence, and to the Old Akkadian name *Um-mi-*ᵈUTU, "Šamaš is my mother". In his view, it was contact with the Sumerians, and their masculine sun god UTU that transformed Šamaš into a male. Assyro-Babylonian influence then worked the same transformation in Syro-Phoenicia and Palestine.[16] While this is quite possible, and probably the best hypothesis advanced so far, the theory is not the only possible explanation of the evidence. For example, the Old Akkadian name "Šamaš is my mother" may be a verbal paradox intended to emphasize a special relationship with the sun god.[17] It is difficult to know. Roberts notes that "it seems certain that the Semitic Šamaš was originally feminine" but expresses no view on how this change came about.[18]

Wiggins suggests that Šapšu has not received her due regard from modern scholars, because of the "competition" of three other goddesses: ʿAnat, Aṯirat, and Aṯtar.[19] As he points out, this is not entirely justified. Since he wrote, a study of ritual at Ugarit has demonstrated that statistically, Šapšu received the ninth greatest volume of sacrificial offerings. The eight deities more favored than her were: (1) il/dgn; (2) bʿal/hdd; (3) ʿAnat; (4) ršp; (5) yrḥ; (6) ktr;

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[14] Lipinski (1991) p. 57.

[15] Bonnet (1989) p. 108 n. 1 and Lipinski (1991) pp. 57-58.

[16] Lipinski (1991) p. 58.

[17] One also meets Phoenician names such as "Milk is my mother", where the deity is male, but the attribute is feminine: Krahmalkov (2000) p. 60.

[18] Roberts (1972) p. 153.

[19] Wiggins (1996) p. 327.

(7) Aṯtaru; and (8) ṯkmn wšnm.[20] Šapšu, therefore, was an important goddess in this respect at least.

One matter which must be prominently noted is that in a letter to the king of Ugarit, Šapšu is invoked second, in the sequence of deities, after Baal alone, and before all others. It is important to note that in this sequence she is referred to as *Šapšu ʿlm* ("the eternal sun"). The relevant portion of KTU 2.42 reads:

l. mlk. *b[ʿly]*
rg.[m]
tḥm. rb. mi[. ʿbdk]
l. pʿn. bʿly [. *mrḥqtm]*
šbʿd. w. šbʿd [.*qlt*]
ankn. rg*m*t. l. bʿl. *ṣp[n]*
l. špš. ʿl*m*. l. ʿṯtrt
l. ʿnt. l. kl. il alṯy [šlm]
nmry. mlk. ʿlm …

To the king [my] l[ord]
spea[k],
Message of the chief/prince, [your servant]
To the feet of my lord, [far away]
seven times and seven times [I fall/prostrate]
I am truly speaking to Baal Sapo[n]
to Šapšu the eternal one, to Athtirat,
To ʿAnat, to all the gods of Alathiya/Alashiya
Nimmuriya, king of eternity …

The tablet is quite fragmentary, and I have followed KTU's restorations. However, I have not translated the "šlm" at the end of line 8, as it is, according to Pardee, a "hypothetical restoration".[21] Evidence gathered by Pardee shows that the phrase "king of eternity" was often used for the king of the underworld and probably meant "king of the dead".[22] The significance of this

[20] del Olmo Lete (1999) pp. 66-71.

[21] Pardee (1987) p. 207.

[22] See Pardee (1987) p. 205 n. 24, and the developed argument in Pardee (1988) pp. 89-91. I am not sure that the word *ʿlm* had one sense and one sense only during its currency, which does seem to be the basis upon which Pardee proceeds in his analysis of Ugaritic and biblical material. There is a dispute as to whether this is indeed a reference to an otherwise unknown deity, or to the king of Egypt.

will become apparent when I return to Phoenicia in the next chapter.

The goddess Šapšu plays a leading role in the snakebite texts and the Baal sequence. Especially in the Baal sequence, we find material which is consistent with, if not supportive of, the putative cosmological function of the sun in Phoenician religion. I could not locate any data which seemed to me to be inconsistent. Husser's recent study of Šapšu contended that the goddess had three chief roles at Ugarit: (a) as mediator between gods and men; (b) in the serpent bite texts; and (c) as psychopompe.[23] In place of the third, it might be more accurate to talk of Šapšu's chthonic connections. There may be a common thread to all these functions: perhaps Šapšu's chief role was as bringer of light, warmth, life, and the diurnal cycle as she travels through the sky. That is, those functions which are most closely related to the sun are those which centrally define her. The other three roles seem to be developments in addition to, not in detraction from, her existence as the sun. In one sense, there is not much more to say about this function precisely because it is so pervasive: we can never forget that Šapšu is the sun.

However, there is some iconic evidence which has not been considered for some time, so far as I can tell. In 1951, Parrot published a Hittite seal, then in 1959 and 1973, Du Mesnil Du Buisson reinterpreted it. The hematite seal bears some enigmatic images and seems to center on the deity fifth from the left, almost certainly a goddess. The relevant designs are found at the right hand side (this portion of the seal comprises Figure 1). There are two "mountain men" at the far right, with horned crowns and hands raised. To their immediate left is a figure which Parrot described as:

> … une des plus énigmatiques et en même temps une des plus élégantes de lignes de toute la glyptique ancienne. Dans la position d'un coureur "à ses marques" un homme s'apprête à bondir … Ajoutons que l'athlète, aux formes souples et élancées, est dominé par une gerbe de flammes qui jaillissent en huit rais épanouis, de sa tête et de sa nuque.[24]

[23] Husser (1997).

[24] Parrot (1951) p. 184.

Parrot dates the seal to not long after the middle second millennium BCE, construing it as Hittite.[25] Du Mesnil Du Buisson reinterpreted the two mountain deities as the gods who join sky and earth. The sun passes between these as (s)he rises. The figure with the rays from its head and neck is the sun, having just risen (or preparing to rise) between these mountains.[26] In 1973, Du Mesnil Du Buisson refined his interpretation to argue that the sun deity is Šapšu, for whereas Šamaš is bearded, this figure is not, and does in fact appear female. This is likely, therefore, to be a Ugaritic figure, and the only known representation of Šapšu. The two mountains are those which Baal told his messengers to lift, to obtain access to the underworld.[27] While "twin peaks" are a feature of some sacred mountains in the area, this mountain may be Ṣapon, which also had two peaks.[28]

The only other candidate for the female deity of this seal is the Sun Goddess of Arinna, who was known in Ugaritic times. However, this is fairly unlikely, because the Sun Goddess of Arinna is portrayed with a strange bonnet which does not in the least resemble the one shown here. The Arinna deity, whose name may have been Hepat, has headgear which looks like a flat sailor's cap at 45 degrees, with a horizontal board curling beneath at each extremity, almost like the capital of a Doric column.[29] This alone would suffice to make it improbable that we have here a depiction of the Sun Goddess of Arinna. If this is a depiction of Šapšu, as seems likely, it is evidence for an understanding of her as the sun itself, and of her course through the heavens, with her train and companions. By showing her actual course through the heavens,

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[25] Parrot (1951) pp. 185-190.

[26] Du Mesnil Du Buisson (1959).

[27] Du Mesnil Du Buisson (1973) p. 5, and KTU 1.4.viii 1-4.

[28] Wyatt (2001) p. 148: "Mount Saphon in Syria has two main peaks (Kasion and Anti-Kasion in Greek …). … (Other) examples are Gerizim and Ebal at ancient Shechem, and Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon (= Hermon) in the Lebanon". One may add Mount Mašu of Mesopotamian legend. Horowitz (1998) p. 97 n. 3 observes that the very name Mount Mašu appears to mean "Twin Mountain(s)" and that the sun rises through twin-peaked mountains in Old Akkadian cylinder seals. The Hittite storm god Tešub is shown standing on two holy mountains, Namni and Hazzi. Hazzi is Ṣapon: Clifford (1972) pp. 32-34.

[29] Wouters (1980). The bonnet is illustrated at p. 66.

with the two mountains through which she rises, this seal graphically and strikingly supplements our understanding of the Ugaritic conception of the sun goddess.

Smith stated of Šapšu that she is a "divine messenger who mediates among the rival claimants and travels between the realms of life and death".[30] That is, her function as psychopompe is a specialized area of her role as mediator. The chief evidence for this responsibility comes from the Baal Cycle. There is no unanimity amongst scholars about the cycle and its significance,[31] although consensus seems to have been reached about the order in which it is to be read.[32]

There is currently speculation that it may reflect certain political aims of King Niqmaddu II, whose name ("Addu has vindicated") is a Baal name. A colophon is taken as evidence that Niqmaddu sponsored the writing of the Baal cycle, but beyond this the data is admittedly slender.[33] However, the monarch's name may simply reflect the eminence of Baal at Ugarit. The cycle itself seems to have three parts: the struggle with Yam, building Baal a house, and the struggle with Motu.[34]

In this work, Šapšu is frequently referred to as *nrt ilm*—"the lamp of the gods", an appropriate enough term for the sun. She is shown in KTU 1.2.iii admonishing Aṯtar to be sensible. The same event, described in almost identical words, is found at KTU 1.6.vi 22-35, where Šapšu addresses Motu, and it is this rebuke and appeal to his common sense, that settles the life and death cosmic struggle between Baal and Motu. It is not clear whether she is speaking as a "divine courier" and "like most messengers of the ancient world, she speaks with the authority of her sovereign",[35] or whether she is speaking on her own account and bringing forward in argument the hard facts. That is, perhaps the goddess is acting on her own accord, and is the voice of reason, so to speak. As

[30] Smith (1994) p. xxiii.

[31] Wyatt (1998) pp. 34-35.

[32] The order adapted in Wyatt (1998) is typical of the modern consensus. See Gibson (1984) pp. 204-211; Smith (1986) pp. 324-327 and Pardee (1997) pp. 241-242, especially note 4.

[33] Smith (1994) pp. 88-90. See also Dietrich (1996) p. 38 on this king.

[34] Wyatt (1998) p. 34, and the text which follows in translation.

[35] As Wiggins (1996) pp. 328-329 and 336 thinks likely.

Wiggins notes, Šapšu is more of an "illuminator" than a messenger.[36]

Wiggins is quite correct to observe that "it would be no surprise" if the sun should be the messenger of the gods, and I certainly agree with him that she is "a link between the heavens and the earth and of the ends of the earth". However, one cannot assume that the sun will always be the gods' dispatch rider. In Greece, for example, Hermes and Isis had this role, not the sun. There is something unique to Šapšu in this respect: she seems to be the voice of reason. If one compares her with a figure like ʿAnat, one could even entertain the possibility that Šapšu had been deliberately drawn to represent moderation.[37]

Another aspect of this role of mediator, or messenger, may be that she is sent to search for Baal when he disappears after burial.[38] Šapšu is not, then, simply a messenger. She is more precisely the deity who is sent, or goes out to perform certain tasks: delivering messages, speaking reason when it is needed, and searching the earth. The search for Baal may also be related to the common idea that the sun is all-seeing, or at least, that it travels all over the earth.[39]

The basic details of the way Šapšu discharged her duties are not entirely clear. It is believed that Šapšu and the stars set by sinking into the ocean. This had mythological overtones, as Du Mesnil Du Buisson demonstrates. Šapšu, being both the sun and the goddess, then proceeded on her journey, and shone in the underworld.[40]

The fact that Šapšu functions as a psychopompe is not in serious doubt. Perhaps the most important text is the enigmatic KTU 1.161, almost certainly a ceremonial prayer for the benefit of the deceased king Niqmaddu. The *incipit* tells us that it is: *spr. dbḥ. ẓlm*. The only transparent word here is the first: "document". This is the document of the *dbḥ ẓlm*. Scholars have made many attempts at this: Tsumura translates it as "document of the feast for Ẓalmu".[41] But more recent research, summarized by Wyatt,

[36] Wiggins (1996) p. 337.

[37] ʿAnat is shown as a bloodthirsty goddess in KTU 1.3.ii.

[38] KTU 1.6.iii 22-i.6.iv.

[39] Wiggins (1996) p. 335.

[40] Du Mesnil Du Buisson (1970) pp. 15-16.

[41] Tsumura (1993) p. 42.

establishes that *ẓlm* is in fact the winged solar disk, not only in Ugarit, but in cognate traditions.[42] That is, it is a symbol of a manifestation of Šapšu, and this is consistent with the mythological equivalence between Šaḥar and Šalem, who symbolize the king, and are sons of Šapšu.[43] The correspondence with the Edessa Pericope is apparent.[44] Of critical importance are lines 18 and 19:

> išḥn. špš. w. išḥn.
> *n*yr. rbt. ʾln. špš. tṣ*ḥ*
>
> Descend, Šapšu! Descend
> Great light! May Šapšu shine upon him!

Wyatt is of the opinion that here we find the anticipation that if Šapšu does go down, this will "raise a hope of some redemptive capacity among the dead ancestors".[45] This takes us beyond the role of psychopompe *simpliciter*, and almost makes of her a savior. Yet, as stated at the outset, these various functions all seem to be a reflex of Šapšu's fundamental being as the sun. Wyatt sees the goddess as being invoked to provide warmth, which would constitute an amelioration of the conditions of the dead. Wyatt's supposition seems well-founded. The deified ancestors, the *rpum* are invoked, and they are spoken of in such a way that they seem to be with Šapšu, and able to descend into the underworld to support the deceased ruler. This emerges from the entire text, and seems startlingly clear at lines 2-10. As Wyatt notes, the king's predecessors are "summoned to attend on him at his descent".[46]

As Wyatt notes, there is another view, and that is that the verb išḥn is derived not from a root *šḥḥ* meaning "to bow down", but from the root *šḥn* meaning "to heat".[47] Either would seem to be

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[42] Much of the basic work in this regard is found in Dalley (1986). She, in turn, was following a suggestion made by Winnett in 1970, p. 85.

[43] Wyatt (1998) pp. 431-432, n. 8.

[44] As seen in chapters 1 and 3, this pericope is found in Julian's *Hymn to King Helios*, and mentions the cult of Aziz (os) and Monim (os) in association with the cult of the sun. Aziz and Monim represent the Morning and Evening Stars, which these two Ugaritic deities, also, may well represent.

[45] Wyatt (1998) p. 437 n. 36.

[46] Wyatt (1988) p. 438 n. 38.

[47] This reading is, for example, that favored by the most recent dictionary of Ugaritic: Olmo Lete and Sanmartin (2003) p. 813.

possible, and given Wyatt's interpretation of this passage, the difference in sense may ultimately not be very great. The final "n", which I adopt in agreement with Wyatt, is the energic form, which is well attested with the Ugaritic verb.[48]

In Ugarit, *rpu*—the leader of the "rpum"—is described as *mlk ʿlm*: king of eternity, an appropriate title for someone so closely related with Šapšu. The *Intercessory Prayer* uses this formula several times.[49] *Rpu* appears to have been a healing deity (perhaps a manifestation of Ilu or Baal),[50] and the *rpum* over whom he reigns[51] functioned as healers upon the earth.[52] The *Intercessory Prayer* seems to contemplate that he is a companion of Kothar (*b ḥbr kṯr*),[53] and we know from the Baal Cycle that Kothar travelled all over the Mediterranean. The association between the *rpum* and the dead was, if the texts are read correctly, explicit in Ugarit.[54]

With the *rpum*, the situation in Ugarit differs quite radically from that in Biblical Israel (as attested). There, Yahweh leaves no work or role for the *rpum* who in Israel were—chiefly—indistinct and pathetic inhabitants of Sheol.[55] I say "chiefly", because there was no one monolithic view of the Rephaim in Israel. Psalm 88:10 (= 11 in Hebrew) and Isaiah 26:14 seem to comprise a polemic against the concept of life after death, at least (in the case of Isaiah) for the reprobate. Certainly the Rephaim referred to here receive harsh treatment at Yahweh's hands. It is true that Job 26:5 seems to place them beneath the waters, but it does not offer them any greater dignity for all that.[56]

The role of psychopompe is possibly also mentioned in the Baal Cycle, at 1.3.v.17-18, where the relevant Ugaritic text reads:

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[48] Olmo Lete and Sanmartin (2003) pp. 611-612. The energic also fits the sense of the passage quite well.

[49] KTU 1.108: 1, 19-20, 21, and 22.

[50] Although Rouillard in *DDD* thinks otherwise: p. 694.

[51] KTU 1.108: 23-27.

[52] Parker (1972) pp. 100-104.

[53] KTU 1.108 line 5.

[54] Rouillard in *DDD* p. 692. He also follows these ideas through into ancient Greece: pp. 693-694.

[55] Parker (1972) p. 103.

[56] The tradition about Og (Dt 3:11) is certainly related, although altered in emphasis: see Parker (1972) and Rouillard in *DDD*. There is now a large bibliography on the *rpum*.

16 *nr*t. *i*lm. špš. [ṣḥr]r*t*
17 *la. šm*m. b y[d. bn . ilm. m]*t*

[Will] the torch of the gods, [blaz]ing Šapšu, strength of the heavens, [carry me off] into the ha[nd of the son of Ilu, Mo]tu?[57]

Wyatt gives reasons for preferring to see this as a reference to Šapšu's character as psychopompe, and not as referring to meteorological conditions. The question is a difficult one, because we are not certain who the speaker is here. Wyatt's interpretation is probably correct, even if we cannot be sure, as he suggests, that Ilu is probably mocking ʿAnat, for he alone is immortal, and will never fall into Motu's hands.[58]

The only quibble one might have with this is that while a psychopompe might well carry someone off, that does not seem true to Šapšu's character in the Baal Cycle. "Conduct" might be a happier term. This would tally with the account of Šapšu in 1.4.viii 20-24. Wyatt again translates as "carry off",[59] but I prefer the reading given below. Once more, the interpretation is difficult, but the text runs:

20 … thtan
nrt. ilm. špš
ṣḥrrt. la
šm*m*. b yd. md
d. i*l*m. mt

Attach to[60]
The torch of the gods, Šapšu,
Scorcher, strong one
of the skies, into the hand of the be-
loved of Ilu, Motu.

It seems that here Baal is sending messengers to Motu, telling them that they are to travel to Motu's realm with Šapšu. This may be seen as an extension of her "part in the delivery of royal

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[57] I do not follow all of the translation in Wyatt (1988) p. 84, but he does seem to be correct to read this fragmentary text in the light of 1.4.viii.20-24, which is the next passage I quote.

[58] Wyatt (1988) p. 85 and nn. 65 and 66.

[59] Wyatt (1988) p. 113.

[60] On this reading, see Wiggins (1996) p. 331 n. 30.

communications".[61] Wyatt translates quite differently, reading it as Motu's accusation or perhaps defence that Šapšu helped him to devour Baal:

> … The luminary of the gods, Šapšu!
> by the Burning One, strength of the heavens,
> into the hand(s) of the divine Mot![62]

However, it can also be read as saying that it is Šapšu who is in the hand (*b yd*) of the son of Ilu, Motu.[63] Whichever of these three readings is adopted, the relationship between Šapšu and Motu is clearly not entirely antagonistic: the sun and the death gods seem to be part of the one ecology under Ilu. When we come to consider Philo of Byblos, we shall see that this is relevant.

Then, in KTU 1.6.i.8-18, Šapšu travels to where ʿAnat is mourning over the body of Baal. ʿAnat asks her to lift Baal onto her (i.e., ʿAnat's) shoulders, which she does, and Baal's body is carried back to Mount Ṣapon. This display of compassion by Šapšu may relate to her chthonic role as a healer.[64] I would note, however, that above all else, Šapšu is the sun goddess. However, it appears that ʿAnat then searches for Baal, and in an angry exchange with Motu, it seems that Motu states that Šapšu carried Baal away to him.[65] Wiggins takes this to mean that ʿAnat has now gone in search not of the body, which has been buried, but of Baal.[66] After this, Šapšu is sent out by Ilu to search for Baal, as was mentioned before.[67] If Šapšu helped ʿAnat take Baal's lifeless body to Ṣapon, and then, after Šapšu conducted him to the underworld, ʿAnat went in search of him again, why did Šapšu have to be sent to look for Baal?

I suggest that Baal's body is no longer on Ṣapon. No one knows what has become of him. In the interim, between his burial and this search for Baal, ʿAnat has slain Motu.[68] Baal overcomes

[61] Wiggins (1996) p. 331.

[62] The translation of Wyatt (1998) p. 134.

[63] This is how it is read by Baumgarten (1977) p. 149.

[64] Thus Wiggins (1996) pp. 332-333.

[65] KTU 1.6.ii.5-25.

[66] Wiggins (1996) p. 333. I take it that Wiggins is unwilling to use a word like "soul".

[67] KTU 1.6.iii. 22-1.6.iv.

[68] KTU 1.6.ii.10-37.

the otherwise ineluctable cycle of death, burial, and delivery into Motu's jurisdiction. In support of this, in KTU 1.6.ii.24 Šapšu is said to have delivered Baal to Motu, but in KTU 1.6.iv, after Motu's own decease, when Ilu has seen Baal in a dream (or vision) and realizes that he is alive, Šapšu is sent to look for Baal. This is absurd if Baal has remained dead and in the realm of the dead, which Šapšu visits nightly. I would suggest that the clue to Baal's survival, or rebirth, may be found in his copulation with a heifer and a cow: a mating of epic proportions which yields to him offspring, possibly a son.[69] This finds some support in the fact that Baal's procreation takes place in the *šd*, the "steppe" or "field",[70] and Ilu—having had his vision of Baal's existence—orders Šapšu to search the wells or springs (*ʿnt*) of the steppes (*šdm*).

These passages support the notion that Šapšu had a role as psychopompe. They also show that Šapšu's roles cannot be neatly categorized. The Baal Cycle is obscure. The traditional view is that of Wiggins, that the closing hymn of KTU 1.6.vi.42-53 is to Šapšu, and that Baal is not mentioned there.[71] Husser disagrees with the general view of the hymn found at KTU 1.6.vi.42-53.[72] For Husser, this is a hymn to Baal and not to Šapšu. Husser contends that the lines: *špš rpim tḥtk* / *špš tḥtk ilynm* are susceptible of a reading other than the more obvious reading that Šapšu has authority over the Rephaim and the gods. That more obvious reading is based upon taking *tḥtk* as either a preposition and personal suffix ("below you") or as the second person singular of the verb *ḥtk* "to subdue, control, exercise power".[73] Husser parses *tḥtk* as a third person feminine singular form from *nḥt*, "descend, take below" (as found in Aramaic and Hebrew), and the *k* as a second person masculine suffix relating to Baal. Husser thus reads: "Šapšu makes descend to

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[69] KTU 1.5.v.18-23, and Wyatt p. 125 n. 49 on Baal's "child".

[70] Wyatt (1998) p. 138, n. 92.

[71] Wiggins (1996) p. 337.

[72] KTU 1.6.vi.45-53.

[73] Olmo Lete and Sanmartin (2003) p. 375, accept this sense for this passage. It has been suggested to me that the various deities are "below" the goddess because of the "physical position of the sun, very high in the sky". This does not seem to be a likely reading. Everything bar other heavenly bodies fall beneath the sun, and such an interpretation would render this passage trite.

you the Rephaim, Šapšu makes descend to you the gods".[74] This reading seems forced, and is not assisted by the fact that the verb *nḥt* is otherwise unattested in Ugaritic. The present reading, "Šapšu, you rule the Rephaim, Šapšu, you rule the gods" is preferable, and places Šapšu over the spirits known as the Rephaim.[75]

It may be that it was believed that, each evening, Šapšu sank into the ocean, and successfully passed creatures (perhaps sea serpents) as she traversed her circuit.[76] If this is so, we may here have a mythological basis for her function in these texts.[77] The Baal Cycle closes with these words, perhaps relating to her sinking into the ocean:

1.6.vi.49 … kṯrm, ḥbrk
w ḫss. d ʿtk.
b. ym. arš. w tnn
kṯr. w ḫss. yd
ytr. kṯr. w ḫss

Kothar your associate,
and Hasis your companion,
in the sea are ʿrš and Tnn;
(but) Kothar and Hasis put out,
(and) they pilot (you), Kothar and Hasis.[78]

Though we know that Šapšu is also named as *špš wyrḫ*—"Sun and Moon",[79] we do not know much more about this dual (or separable) deity. Neither do we understand this name "Sun and Moon". Below, we find a phrase which may have like significance, in the Phoenician language text from Karatepe.

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[74] Husser (1997) pp. 227-239, especially 227, 228, 232-234, 236, and 239.

[75] Naccache (1995) proposes a fresh perspective upon the Rephaim, reinterpreting their name to mean "the tranquil ones, the eternally calm", relying upon certain connotations retained in the Arabic lexicon.

[76] Wyatt (1998) p. 330, n. 34, observes that, in Ugarit, the "cosmic sea is serpentine by nature", and hence one can use the parallel "as long as the ocean".

[77] Du Buisson (1970) pp. 15-16, and (1973) p. 14.

[78] This is a difficult passage, see Wyatt (1998) p. 145 n. 126. Wyatt translates *tnn* as "the dragon".

[79] Miller (1987) p. 58.

Finally, the two snakebite texts, KTU 1.100 and 1.107, have much in common, as was noted by Astour.[80] Whether they belong to a series, or are utterly independent, is a moot issue.[81] Given that both texts apparently concern snakebite, and that Šapšu has a central role, it is reasonable to see some ideological correlation. I suggest that both texts show Šapšu as compassionate and as able to help or even to prevail against snakebite (if nothing else).[82]

UGARIT AND PHOENICIA

There is both continuity and, as one would expect, discontinuity between Ugarit and Phoenicia. One need only consider the names of the deities and their functions to see that Baal Haddu, Aṯtart, Rešef and Šapšu, to name perhaps the most important examples, have retained their revered status. Ilu is in an odd position, as when he is referred to in Phoenicia he is a great god, but he is no longer in the foreground—at least on our limited evidence. Deities such as Tanit, Melqart, Ešmun and Adonis hold center stage. These deities, especially Ešmun, may well have roots in more ancient times, but their prominence is typically Phoenician as opposed to Ugaritic.

Links between Phoenicia and Ugarit were apparent even in the Bronze Age. For example, as we saw, Ilu may have been located, when he was on the earth, in the Mount Lebanon range.[83] The unknown goddess who binds a dragon, does so in Lebanon.[84] In the *Kirta* epic, the protagonist makes a pilgrimage of sorts to Athirat of Tyre and a goddess (perhaps also Athirat) of Sidon, prays to them, and offers a vow.[85] It has been suggested that a link between Phoenicia and Lebanon needs to be established. Despite the paucity of our evidence, this link would appear to subsist from

[80] Astour (1968).

[81] Wiggins (1996) p. 338.

[82] This situation is a little more complicated in KTU 1.100 where she sends the mare's message to other deities, and they speak the charm. Yet Šapšu has a central role in that text. It has been suggested to me that this text may not relate to snakebite at all. This is beyond the scope of this thesis.

[83] Margolit (1996) p. 180, would place Ilu's habitat as "the entire length of the Upper Jordan Valley beginning at the foot of Mt. Hermon as far as the Sea of Galilee".

[84] KTU 1.83.

[85] KTU 1.14.iv.35-43.

the two texts cited by Krahmalkov under his entry *LBNN* and to justify his gloss that "LEBANON (is) properly the Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon mountains but serving to denote the Phoenician motherland as against the Phoenician West".[86]

Further, we shall see that Philo speaks of Mouth (the Phoenician equivalent of the Ugaritic Motu) in a way reminiscent of the Baal Cycle. As Xella notes, the disappearance of Baal is a "modèle et parallèle" for Phoenician treatment of Adonis, Melqart, and Ešmun.[87] These are rather striking parallels.

While our stock of Phoenician art from the time of Ugarit is very slight, one Phoenician object which may date from as early as 1250-1100 BCE, although this is controversial, is the Ahiram sarcophagus, which is thought to be not later than 950 BCE. I examine this artefact in more detail in chapter 8. It suffices to say here that Dussaud found elements of similarity between its artwork and Ugaritic themes.[88]

It is also important that there was continuity in the sphere of kingship, as this was a central social and political institution in both Ugarit and Phoenicia. This is demonstrated by the idea of sacral kingship, and divinization of their kings. If all we had to go on was Ezekiel's mocking the king of Tyre for considering himself to be divine, one would be rather hesitant.[89] However, the iconography of Ahiram seems to depict him as having been deified.[90] I suspect that the apotheosis these kings underwent is similar to that described by Postgate for the Sumerian divine kings: that their "divinity" was understood as being qualitatively different from that of the other gods.[91]

Perhaps the most important cross-social similarity is the relationship of Bronze Age Ugarit and Iron Age Phoenicia to the sea and trade. Culturally, both are remarkable for their cosmopolitan attitude, and receptiveness to foreign influences.

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[86] Krahmalkov (2000) p. 253.

[87] Xella (1996) p. 385.

[88] Dussaud (1930) p. 182.

[89] However, Barnett shows that there is a good deal of historicity in Ezekiel's account: Barnett (1969). On sacred kingship, see pp. 7-8.

[90] Dussaud (1969) p. 182.

[91] Postgate (1994) p. 181. Elayi has an opinion to the contrary in respect of Yehawmilk: (1986) p. 258. I do not deal with this, as it is remote from my thesis.

Though this is not a study of the relationship between Phoenicia and Ugarit, I think that enough facts have been marshaled to show that some points of similarity subsisted between them. One cannot assume that any idea, concept, or doctrine which obtained at Ugarit also held sway in Phoenicia, or *vice versa.* Yet I do not think that one can begin from a simply neutral position. Where there is reason to suspect similarity, such conclusions possess, I suggest, a *prima facie* plausibility. If the similarity explains some point which was otherwise not understood in the other culture, then it seems to me that it will more likely be accurate, because the piece fits the puzzle as it were.[92]

In conclusion, we saw that, in Ugarit, the role of the sun goddess is vital in several respects to Ugaritic religion and that she is referred to as Šapšu ʿlm ("the eternal sun") in KTU 2.42. Further, she seems to play the role of messenger between gods, and to represent a rational approach when other deities are locked in irreconcilable war. In short, she is not called "mind", but she functions in a corresponding way. As I noted in chapter 2, this should not occasion us any surprise. The sun, like the mind, performs the cosmic and psychological office of "illumination".

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[92] This is not a historiographic principle of universal application. In my opinion, it applies here because a general cultural kinship can be demonstrated in crucial matters.

CHAPTER 8
PHOENICIAN SOLAR RELIGION: THE FUNERARY INSCRIPTIONS

The aim of this chapter and the next is to collect materials of directly Phoenician origin, other than Mochos, Eudemos, and Philo of Byblos, touching upon Phoenician solar religion. It closes with some analogs from Mesopotamia and Egypt which, by comparison and contrast, may help us to better understand the Phoenician material. If Phoenician religion ever had an "organizing context" comparable to the one which was developed in Israel, it has long been lost.[1] Peckham asserts that Phoenicia never had such a body of systematic ideas. For various reasons, I suspect that he is right, but one cannot be dogmatic. We can be fairly certain that if such a "context" was ever devised in Phoenicia, it was limited to only one or a few centers, and perhaps only within certain social groups, for example, priestly families. This would seem to follow from the nature of the account of Phoenician religion in Philo, and—perhaps—that the Phoenicians did not tenaciously cling to their religion the same way that the Hebrews did.

But then, there is also a large question as to when the "organizing context" arose in Israel. Israelite religion contained many elements, some of which warred with one another: this is clear even in the account of the Hebrew Bible. Further, Phoenician religion was "syncretistic" and receptive. Thus it could, while true to its spirit, allow all sorts of changes. As appears in this thesis, Phoenician religion actually survived until it was replaced, not by Hellenism, but by Christianity. This is not to deny that even on the available evidence, Hellenism had an effect on Phoenician religion. We have no evidence that there was ever an authority in Phoenicia capable of exercising an official or even a de facto religious authority in the sense of being able to control cults or religious practices throughout Phoenicia. Rather, the information we have suggests that there was a variety of belief and cult from city to city,

[1] Peckham (1988), p. 79.

and even from city to "petite bourgade" like Oum el-Amed,[2] a small site only 19 kilometers south of Tyre.[3] Even where the same deities appear again and again (e.g., Baʿal, Astarte, Rešeph, Tanit, and Ešmun), their ubiquity no more indicates a central "ministry of religion" than the use of a common Phoenician tongue might imply a linguistic directorate.

It is important to bear in mind that deities who are central to the religion of the state are not necessarily important to private religion, and vice versa.[4] This is not a purely hypothetical matter, for the surviving treaties with the Phoenician cities do provide some evidence for a pantheon of public significance which is not otherwise attested. One sometimes has difficulty in identifying the deities referred to in these treaties, even if the god's name has been written in phonetic Phoenician.[5] Deities known only from the treaties include ʿAnat-Bethel and Baʿal Malage.[6] If my conjecture that there was a solar theology in Phoenicia is sound, it may well prove to be that the deities (or deity) of the theologians are not at the heart of either the state or private religious constellations.

These are large topics and cannot be disposed of in a perfunctory manner. Scholars constantly find that Phoenician religion was more diverse, and surprising, than had been expected. In particular, it combined features which one finds in Judaism and other West Semitic religions (e.g., aniconism)[7] with features such as iconism which one finds in the polytheism of the Semitic and classical world. One thing which may have differentiated the Phoenician from other Semitic cultures was the extent of its openness to foreign influence, especially from Egypt. Phoenician art looks so much like Egyptian to an untutored eye that it can take a little time to find the purely Phoenician features. Yet Phoenician cults did not enjoy any great popularity in the Roman Empire. Turcan observed:

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[2] Xella (1986) pp. 31-32 and n. 8.

[3] *DCPP* p. 484.

[4] Barré (1983) p. 7.

[5] Clifford (1990) p. 60 has some interesting observations on various attempts to interpret the treaties.

[6] Barré (1983) pp. 43-46, 78-80, and 84-86. See *DCPP* pp. 28-29 and 59 and Clifford (1990) p. 60.

[7] I am aware that there is a good deal of debate about when Israel became aniconic.

> … [G]enerally speaking, the Syrian of Syro-Phoenician religions were far from having the same impact on public life as the Egyptian gods or the Great Mother. Although the Syrians were to some extent omnipresent in the Roman world, in the fields of pottery, painting and sculpture, their gods were not in the same league as Cybele, Attis, Isis and Serapis. … Syrian cults were further singled out from other Graeco-oriental religions by their relative plurality and disparity[, the] various Baals and Baalats … their animal environment, or sometimes their 'aniconic' cult.[8]

Classical writers tended to mention only the features of Phoenician religion which either appealed or appalled.[9] Thus we must pay careful attention to all of the sources, especially those which emanate from Phoenicia, be they transmitted to us at second hand (as in the case of Philo or through Damaskios, who will be dealt with later), or first hand, as by inscriptions, names, artifacts, or coins. Ancient writers did not share our ideas about acknowledging the sources of their ideas. Sometimes they would cite another writer, or on other occasions use material without mentioning their source. For example, the Greek philosopher Parmenides had access to Mesopotamian traditions, whether directly or indirectly, because his work shows parallels of so striking a nature and in such detail that an ultimate Babylonian origin for some of his major motifs cannot be doubted.[10] Thus we should be aware that Phoenician ideas may have been used without acknowledgement.

Our sources for the history of the ancient world are incomplete. In regard to Phoenicia, it would be better to say that the utter *loss* of our sources is *all but complete*. That is, the emphasis must always be on how much has disappeared. It is known that the Phoenicians wrote a great deal, none of which has directly come down to us. Today, only the various foreign witnesses to this literature survive. In addition to the statement of Strabo,[11] and the evidence of Josephus, we have from Pomponius Mela's *Description of the World*:

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[8] Turcan (1992) pp. 132-133.

[9] The main example of this second reaction is human sacrifice. This complex topic is not relevant here.

[10] Kingsley (1995) pp. 392-393.

[11] Cited in chapter 3.

> The Phoenicians are a clever branch of the human race and exceptional in regard to the obligations of war and peace, and they made Phoenicia famous. They devised the alphabet, *literary pursuits*, and other arts too; they figured out how to win access to the sea by ship …[12]

One would *prima facie* expect a people who played an eminent role in the development of the alphabet to have put that alphabet to good and extensive use. However, as the Phoenicians chiefly wrote on papyrus, a material which does not keep in the moist climate of Lebanon, the literature has perished, leaving inscriptions in stone, of which very few have ever been recovered. Two papyrus scraps have been preserved in the sands of Egypt, one being a letter—from a woman to her sister—invoking Baʿal Ṣapon and a local collection of deities.[13]

Of relevance here is an additional short inscription found with the sarcophagus of Ahiram of Byblos. The inscription on the sarcophagus itself is dealt with at some length below. However, some works omit this curious graffito,[14] found in the shaft. As *Kanaanäische und Aramäische Inschriften* notes, it was probably intended to deter intruders before they chanced upon the sarcophagus.[15] If so, it is eloquent of the literacy expected of the average Byblian tomb thief. The inscription is very difficult, but it seems to read:[16]

> ldʿt
> hn bʿlk
> tḥt zn
>
> Know this!
> Here is your lord
> Beneath this (shaft).

This graffito seems to assume that if one of his subjects (for it speaks of *your lord*) knew that this was the royal tomb, they would

[12] Pomponius Mela (1997) 1.65, p. 53. My italics.

[13] This is KAI 50. See KAI vol. 2, pp. 65-67.

[14] For example, McCarter in Hallo (2000) does not provide it.

[15] KAI vol.2, pp. 4-5.

[16] I follow Krahmalkov (2000) pp. 160 and 206 as against KAI 2 and *SSI* 3, p. 17. The alternative readings would not materially affect my thesis except in so far as instead of a reference to "your lord" there would be a reference to "ypd lk", translated by Gibson in *SSI 3* as "disaster for you".

cease and desist from desecration and plunder. Naïve as this may appear, the warning does seem to be addressed to anyone who might be digging.[17] This is even more apparent on the usual reading of the inscription, for most writers see the inscription on the sarcophagus with its curse formula as addressed only to those persons of power who may rise up *against* Byblos.[18] That is, we can infer from each inscription to whom it was directed: the main inscription on the sarcophagus was for kings and other people in power, whereas this graffito is not addressed to kings, and seems to me to be placed to forestall excavators. Indeed, it seems to be addressed to one person, as it uses the singular suffix "k".[19] This suggests a lone digger, not a team of soldiers of an invading power, and it assumes a rather high level of literacy. There is always the possibility that the graffito was intended to operate magically, but it does not strike me as a spell, and is not accompanied by any surviving images.[20]

It has been argued by Young, specifically in respect of the Hebrew language Tomb of the Royal Steward, that the warning there does not assume that the grave robbers would have been literate. Unless the robbers belonged to the "scribes, priests and the upper class" of ancient Israelite society, then this would run counter to Young's hypothesis on the extent of literacy in ancient Israel.[21] As he notes, we do tend to assume that grave robbers were "of low social standing".[22] Although Young does not address the position in Phoenicia, his arguments must be considered, for he supplies an alternative hypothesis to the one presented here: that is, that literacy may well have been widespread in Phoenicia.

On Young's hypothesis, there would be "a relatively high proportion of literates" in Jerusalem. A public written text might arouse a good deal of interest in a society where there was less writing on display than in ours. The people of that time might well

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[17] This is based on Krahmalkov's reading: (2000) p. 369.

[18] For example, *SSI 3*, pp. 14-15, McCarter in Hallo (2000) p. 181, and KAI 2, p. 2, "gegen Byblos".

[19] I am indebted to Ms. Davey for this point. Her suggestion is correct: Krahmalkov (2001) pp. 51 and 54.

[20] On the question of who read inscriptions, see Bodel (2001) pp. 15-19.

[21] Young (1998) pp. 420-422.

[22] Young (1998) p. 421.

be interested to know what the inscription meant, especially if they were "potential robbers investigating a possible target", and as written texts were read aloud in antiquity, the robbers would accordingly learn the contents of the inscription, although themselves illiterate.[23]

The suggestion is not implausible, but it is still only a hypothesis. The more natural reading is that it is addressed to potential robbers. It is not addressed in general terms such as "let it be known", but to "you" in the singular. Further, in a society where literacy was restricted to a narrow elite, one would perhaps expect that images of demons might be relied upon, rather than a roundabout method which relied upon the curiosity of thieves. Finally, it may well be that this inscription reflects Phoenician influence, and hence is more eloquent of literacy levels there, than in Israel.[24]

It is a curiosity of history that the longest surviving inscriptions in the Phoenician language are those from the Hittite and Aramean kingdoms far north of Byblos which adopted Phoenician as a prestige language for their royal steles.

There is also some indirect evidence that there was a good deal more literature around the topic of Phoenicia than has survived. Tatian the Assyrian, who was apparently born in Mesopotamia about 110 CE, and by the time of his death in 172 was living in Antioch,[25] might have been well-placed in describing the Phoenician histories written in Greek. He attributes these to Theodotus, Hypsicrates, and Mochos. The last of these is today known from a very brief extract in Damaskios' work *On the First Principles.* But it is quite possible that the others also wrote in Greek, and that, as Tatian states, they related Phoenician history to the Greek and Hebrew stories of the Phoenicians. Tatian also declares that Menander of Pergamus wrote a history of those matters, although Tatian does not say that he wrote from Phoenician source material. Tatian adds that one Chaitos translated Phoenician books into Greek and wrote some biographies of

[23] Young (1998) pp. 421-422.

[24] For Phoenician influence in this inscription, see Avishur (2000) pp. 112-113.

[25] Ryland (1956) pp. 62–63.

Phoenician philosophers.[26] Although it is lost, it is worth noting that Alexandros of Rhodes, a historian, and possibly a priest of the first or second century BCE, wrote a book which described the mythical origins of the Phoenicians.[27]

Elsewhere, I have published my reasons for accepting as true, Josephus' assertion in his *Against Apion* that he had access to works by Dion and Menander of Ephesus who wrote Greek language histories based upon Phoenician language sources in Tyre.[28] At that time, I omitted to deal with the arguments of Van Seters, chiefly because he accepts that there may have been Tyrian records of some description, although he proceeds to demonstrate that as they appear in Josephus, they cannot be uncritically used as evidence for the chronology of the Tyrian ruling house.[29] In my view, Van Seters makes out a strong case that we do not know the nature of these "annals". However, he is, I would suggest, too skeptical and yet too confident, in different respects.

First, Van Seters discusses the rolls maintained by the king of Byblos and referred to in the Wen-Amon story.[30] Of this reference, he writes: "Even if we take this reference as a historical, and not just a fictional, statement it probably refers to nothing more than economic accounts and records", and observes that "daybooks" were maintained on papyrus in Egypt.[31] But why? We know absolutely nothing about what the author of Wen-Amon had in mind. This is, with respect, a gratuitous "probably". Byblos developed a most remarkable syllabic alphabet in the Middle Bronze Age, which has so far resisted all attempts to read the pitiful fragments we have.[32] Van Seters does not explain why we

[26] *Address of Tatian to the Greeks*, chap. 37 (p. 80 of the edition in *ANF* vol. 2).

[27] Mygind (1999) p. 268. There are also some Phoenician stories in Nonnos.

[28] Azize (2000) pp. 206-208. The passage in Josephus is *Against Apion* 1.112-120.

[29] Van Seters (1983) pp. 195-199.

[30] The Wen-Amon story is well known. A recent translation is an appendix to Aubet (2001).

[31] Van Seters (1983) p. 198.

[32] There have been many studies: one recent attempt is that of George E. Mendenhall, *The Syllabic Inscriptions from Byblos*, American University of Beirut, Beirut, 1985. It provides a full discussion of the texts (nine texts on copper plate and stone).

would expect the king of Byblos to "probably" have only economic accounts. In fact, for reasons given elsewhere, it seems to me most unlikely that there was not an extensive and imaginative Phoenician literature in the Bronze Age, especially when considering the literary heritage of Ugarit. Also, if, as Van Seters seems to think, comparisons between Byblos and the Egyptians are apt, then it is a matter of record that the Egyptians had a substantial literature.

Second, Van Seters' argument tends to proceed on the basis that if something has not been cited by Josephus then it cannot have been in the Tyrian annals. This is not explicitly stated, but it ineluctably follows from Van Seters' observation that Josephus suggests "that they contain references to biblical material, such as the building of Solomon's Temple. But when he quotes the Annals directly in support of his statements it is clear that the Annals do not contain any information about Solomon's Temple".[33] Similarly, he observes "events within the reign of a particular king are rarely dated, whereas we would expect precise dates in annalistic texts".[34] These arguments fail to persuade for the obvious reason that whatever text may have been available to Josephus, it is not available to us. It is not cogent to argue from such limited excerpts back to the source document. There may have been accounts of the Temple and precise dates of the sort Van Seters requires, but these are not extant, so the thesis must remain speculative.

I would also refer to the arguments of Brown, who in a concise study of Menander of Ephesus (or Pergamum) concludes that it was "plain" that Menander had been working from original sources as claimed.[35] When one considers the details given about the rule of Tyre after the siege by Nebuchadnezzar, one might judge that they have a taste of authenticity, although such a consideration can never be determinative, as it is subjective, and the wiles of pseudonymists seem endless.[36]

On the other hand, Josephus also states that correspondence between Hiram and Solomon has survived. This is a different issue. The relationship between Hiram and Solomon attracted a good deal of attention in the late ancient world. Solomon himself loomed large in late antique Judaism, and pseudonymous works such as

[33] Van Seters (1983) pp. 195-6.
[34] Van Seters (1983) p. 198.
[35] Brown (1969) pp. 181-185.
[36] I refer to the passage from *Against Apion* 1.156-158.

Qohelet, the *Odes of Solomon*, and the *Wisdom of Solomon* were created. In addition, the story that Hiram helped Solomon to build the temple in Jerusalem possessed the attractive mystique attending upon raising the glorious house of the Lord. This "correspondence" between Hiram and Solomon is not genuine: it can be dismissed *tout court*. It does, however, testify to an interest of the ancient world, and it would be interesting to survey the "pseudo-Solomonic" corpus, but it is not relevant to this thesis. It suffices to say that Josephus never alleges that Dios or Menander are his sources for this correspondence.[37] Eupolemos, and perhaps also Theophilos, created a body of letters to and from Solomon, which were uncritically accepted and cited by Eusebius.[38]

So while one cannot accept every assertion made in ancient documents, there are other ways of establishing the richness of Phoenician intellectual culture. After a study of the material in the *Phoenician History* of Philo of Byblos, Baumgarten concludes:

> We may suppose that every Phoenician city, not to say, temple, had its own mythology, beginning with a cosmogony and theogony and going on to local heroes, of whom many will have been connected with cultural innovations.[39]

Another matter to be borne in mind is that in a passage preserved by Eusebius, Porphyry, himself a Phoenician, refers to Phoenician king lists in support of his contention that Abibaʿal, king of Beirut, and Hierombaʿal both lived before the Trojan War.[40] Further, Porphyry states that the history (ἱστορία) which Hierombaʿal dedicated to Abibaʿal was accepted as accurate by the ἐξεταστῶν τῆς ἀλήθειας: "les examinateurs de la vérité" in Des Places' translation.[41] Attridge and Oden note that this title is "obscure", but propose that "Porphyry thus suggests that the king of Beirut had civil servants who audited historical records".[42]

This piece of information conveys more than would appear at first reading. It reveals that Porphyry had access to information,

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[37] Josephus *Against Apion* 1.111. This point is also made by Brown (1969) pp. 181-186, accepting that they are fictitious.

[38] Eusebius, *Praeparatio Evangelica*, 9.33-34.

[39] Baumgarten (1980?) p. 189.

[40] Eusebius, *Praeparatio Evangelica* 1.9.20-21 (1974) pp. 178-179.

[41] Eusebius, *Praeparatio Evangelica* 1.9.20-21 (1974) pp. 178-179.

[42] Attridge and Oden (1981) p. 25 n. 26.

which he considered to be reliable, about checks made by Phoenician historians in the distant past.

It has taken a little time to make this preliminary point, but it is worth making, because the historian of ancient Phoenicia can too readily assume that what does not now exist never did exist, and this skews one's assessment of the surviving testimonies to Phoenician culture. Conversely, the more aware we are that our sources for ancient Phoenicia have basically vanished, the less likely we will be to jump to unwarranted conclusions, and the greater our preparedness to remain open-minded before the material.

THE SUN IN PHOENICIA

This now brings us directly to the central question of this chapter: what do we know of the sun in Phoenicia, and of the sun deity? This topic has been dealt with in several places, and on occasion the same evidence has been repeated, as it must be. Yet it is desirable to keep track of the evidence for this topic, and so I enumerate each datum. Because there were too many considerations to fit into one chapter, I have dealt with two topics here, and the balance in the next chapter.

(1) THE NAME

The Phoenician and Punic name for the sun deity is, as noted in chapter 1, the same as the term for the sun itself: *šmš*, and the Semitic development of the name was treated in that chapter. A sun deity who appears to have been female is preserved in the illustration upon a seventh century BCE bronze harness from Salamis on Cyprus.[43] However, a name "Semes is my father" has come down to us.[44] One must bear in mind that sometimes Phoenician names sound to us like contradictions in terms: for example, "Baʿal is my family", "Mlk is my family",[45] "Ešmun is my mother", and "Mlk is my mother".[46] Yet, for reasons given later, I consider it more likely that, as in Mesopotamian, the Phoenician

[43] Moscati (1988) p. 193. The name of the town is Semitic, and much of the art found there is Phoenician and Punic: see e.g., *DCPP* pp. 385-386. However, such a find can hardly be considered conclusive.

[44] Krahmalkov (2000) p. 35.

[45] Krahmalkov (2000) p. 38.

[46] Krahmalkov (2000) pp. 59 and 60

solar deity Šamaš was male, but cannot discount the possibility that the sun god could on occasions be treated as female.

For the Phoenician language, Krahmalkov provides two meanings for the root *šmš*. The second of these is cognate with the Hebrew *šemeš*, and is a feminine noun for the "sun". In this respect, Krahmalkov agrees with Tomback.[47] However, this is only Krahmalkov's second meaning for this root. His first meaning, rendered as *š-m-š* is "serve, minister", and is given as a *qal* form of the verb. The sense seems to be justified on the Punic inscription given there. It is apparent that if this verb has been derived metaphorically from the proper name of the sun deity, it is consistent with my hypothesis about the nature of the sun deity in Ugaritic and Phoenicia. The sun serves the divine order, the same way that the personified Šapšu serves Ilu and Baʿal. The compassionate sun serves everyone in need as Šapšu aided the mare and Širugazuz in the "snakebite" texts, and ʿAnat in the Baʿal Cycle.

The same root is attested with this meaning also in the Aramaic of Palmyra and Hatra.[48] While the sense is attested only in later languages, it is, nonetheless suggestive, and it must be borne in mind that the lack of earlier attestation of this meaning may well be due to the paucity of sources.

This development in meaning supports my thesis in so far as it touches upon Phoenicia, although I would think that it is attested too late to serve as evidence for Ugarit. Perhaps this sense of "serving" developed from the notion of the sun, analogous to the way that the noun "Christ" fathered the verbs "christen" (to administer baptism), and the archaic "christianize" (to convert to Christianity). Such developments are true to the processes which took place in Ugarit and Phoenicia. As Bonnet notes, it seems as if the "natural entity (i.e., the sun) … was divinized".[49] This necessarily involved some lexical developments, and it appears that these developments continued along the lines discussed.

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[47] Krahmalkov (2000) p. 472 and Tomback (1978) pp. 325-326.

[48] *DNWSI* p. 1168.

[49] Bonnet (1989) p. 108.

(2) FUNERARY INSCRIPTIONS

The most famous Phoenician inscription of all is probably the one engraved on the sarcophagus of King Ahiram of Byblos. Soon after its discovery in 1923 it had been dated to the thirteenth century BCE, and there has been controversy ever since. There are presently opinions that the *inscription* dates from about 1000 BCE, the time of Ahiram, but that the actual sarcophagus may be older. Parrot is dismissive of these arguments. In his opinion, it is absurd to imagine that a king would reuse a sarcophagus and then flourish maledictions over anyone attempting precisely the same reuse.[50] Porada has, in my view, disposed of such arguments, and shows that the sarcophagus itself is probably to be dated from the tenth century BCE, probably between 1000 and 950 BCE.[51] More recently, Wallenfels has argued that this inscription, and certain other Byblian inscriptions, should be redated both absolutely and relatively to each other.[52] I shall not discuss Wallenfels' arguments because, for my purposes, nothing turns upon the precise, or even upon the relative datings, of the inscriptions.

Further, whether the sarcophagus predates the inscription is not critical to me: however, my own view is that the onus rests upon scholars alleging that the sarcophagus and its inscription are of different vintages to make out their contention.

Reading of the inscription is, on some points, controversial.[53] A short history of various scholarly proposals to 1947 for the dating is given by Albright.[54] The important first line, which is the relevant one here, reads:

> ʼrn z pʻl [ʼ]tbʻl bn ʼḥrm mlk gbl lʼḥrm ʼbh kšth bʻlm[55]
>
> [This is the] Coffin which he made, [A]tbaʻal son of Ahiram, king of Byblos, for Ahiram his father, as his place for eternity.

[50] Parrot (1960) p. 197.

[51] Porada (1973) pp. 355, 357-359, and 362-264.

[52] Wallenfels (1983).

[53] A short recent note with bibliography and a photograph can be found in *DCPP*, pp. 10-11. The most recent scholarly translation, with annotations and bibliography, known to me, is that of P. Kyle McCarter, in Hallo and Younger (2000) p. 181.

[54] Albright (1947) pp. 153-154.

[55] *SSI* 3, p. 14.

This is consistent with the reading of the *editio princeps*, where Dussaud translated the relevant phrase as "comme sa demeure pour l'éternité".[56] The reading is not in modern favor, but it seems to me to deserve consideration, if not only because it does not need to resort to emendation or difficult readings. McCarter's reading of the text would have Ittobaʿal referring to "when he placed him in eternity".[57] However, Krahmalkov, following earlier suggestions, amends the text by adding a "t" after the final "b" of this line, so that it reads "bt ʿlm", or "house for eternity", which is a phrase for a tomb or mausoleum.[58] Krahmalkov then translates the passage as: "<This is> the coffin that Ittobal son of Ahiram, King of Byblos made for his father Ahiram. He placed it there in the tomb". This possibility was first noted by Dussaud who pointed to parallels from Palmyra and Egypt.[59]

However, Dussaud's reading has the advantage of accepting the text. It is a sound methodological principle that amendments should be entertained where necessary. Also, this is the important first sentence of a royal inscription. This by no means precludes the possibility of a scribal error, and amendments are commonly accepted for this text, but one would not lightly make such changes.[60]

The difference in reading comes partly because McCarter takes the third person suffix "h" as referring to Ahiram, whereas Krahmalkov sees it as resuming the initial noun "coffin". Neither reading seems to me to be entirely impossible, and perhaps this is a function of the terseness of the inscription. That the phrase *bt ʿlm* for "tomb" is known in Punic[61] is not decisive, for the phrase *b ʿlm* is not nonsensical. To say that Ahiram is placed "in eternity" seems

[56] Dussaud (1924) p. 136.

[57] McCarter in Hallo and Younger (2000) p. 181.

[58] Krahmalkov (2000) p. 132. The earlier suggestions are supported by Gibson, who states that "b" is in fact an abbreviation for "bt", and cites the abbreviation "by" for "byt", attested in Aramaic papyri and in Syriac: *SSI 3*, p. 15.

[59] Dussaud (1924) p. 139.

[60] I think that in dealing with ancient languages like Phoenician, where we only have fragments to go by, the search for a "correct" translation may be supplemented by the placing of several possible translations side by side for scholarly comment.

[61] *SSI 3*, p. 15.

absurdly laconic, and as McCarter concedes, it is otherwise unknown. McCarter also rejects as "unlikely" the proposed amendment from *b ʿlm* to *bt ʿlm*.[62] The Albright thesis, that a "b" is missing from the word *šth*, was also rejected. This would result in the reading "as his abode for eternity".[63] However, the project of amending the text is not entirely happy, and tends to lead only to more proposals. Perhaps the best comment is Cook's: "The interpretation of *b ʿlm* remains unclear".[64]

The reading proposed by Dussaud is possible if one can take *št* as a noun for "place" or "dwelling". I concede that the dictionaries of Tomback and Krahmalkov list *št* only as a verb. They note that *b* may have a temporal connotation.[65] Other readings may be preferable. The dialect of Byblos did not become the standard dialect of Phoenicia,[66] and given the slim volume of comparative material, our understanding of it is not exhaustive. Whichever reading is preferred, and I emphasize that I see little objective reason to strongly prefer one to the other, both readings bear witness to the concept of "eternity" (*ʿlm*). That concept can have reference only to the changed existence of the dead person.

The artwork of the sarcophagus is instructive. Dussaud early observed that the king seated on a sphinx throne appears to have been divinized, that the lotus held by the king on the sarcophagus lid (see Figure 2) is probably a symbol of existence beyond the grave, and that the lotus held by the king appears to be *reversed*.[67] Further, the lions have been taken by Du Mesnil Du Buisson as symbols of immortality, and not simply as guardians.[68] It seems to me that there is some merit in this suggestion.

We do not have enough Phoenician material to be able to decide the issue without also examining the position elsewhere. In Mesopotamia, the lion seems to have chiefly been depicted in art as an object of the royal hunt. When it appears as a figure in its own right it is as a guardian of throne rooms and toilets or as a

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[62] McCarter in Hallo and Younger (2000) p. 181 n. 3.
[63] Albright (1947) p. 155.
[64] Cook (1994) p. 34.
[65] Which it does, meaning "in, on, during": Krahmalkov (2000) p. 92.
[66] Cook (1994) p. 35.
[67] Dussaud (1930) p. 182.
[68] Du Mesnil Du Buisson (1973) pp. 58-59 and note to figure 21.

composite creature with the qualities of a demon or a protector.[69] The lions on the bottom of Ahiram's sarcophagus may be similar to these: they support the sarcophagus and could be guarding it.

However, the same need not necessarily apply to the lions on the sarcophagus lid. First, there are only two lions there. The significance of an artistic motif can vary depending on whether it is shown alone or in plurality, and, if more than once, the number of times it appears. An example of this is the star. In Mesopotamian art, one star may represent Ištar (especially if it is an eight pointed star); while seven stars—no more and no fewer—will probably represent the Pleiades. Another factor is the juxtaposition of symbols: thus a group of four lions together with a man can function as a swastika. What the swastika itself stands for is another matter, but it may be a settlement, the sun, a whirlwind, or perhaps any or all of these.[70]

In the case of the Ahiram sarcophagus, the lions on the lid of the sarcophagus are shown *in conjunction* with the two males holding their lotuses. So far as I can tell, the lotus is not known as a symbol in Mesopotamian art of any significance at all. It seems to me that the artistic associations on the lid can only be explained by reference to the artistic traditions of Egypt, for it is there alone that I can find an artistic system in which both lotuses and lions are significant in a *funerary* context, the critical circumstance here.

In Egypt, the symbolism of the lotus (a water lily growing in three different varieties) seems to focus around the fact that it rises from the water each day, and closes and retracts into the water each night. It is, for example, associated with the sun. The sun could even be referred to as being the "great lotus who appeared from Nun".[71] In a funerary context, it was "a symbol of rebirth". The *Book of the Dead* contains spells to become a lotus, "and thus (sc. to come) into the reality of resurrection".[72] The lion has a massive array of symbolic uses in Egypt, some of which are specific to its use singly, or in pairs, or in one of any number of contexts. Apart

[69] Black and Green (1992) pp. 118-122. See also Collon (1995) in the index for numerous references to artifacts depicting lions.

[70] Van Buren (1945) pp. 120-122. If the swastika is a solar symbol, then a swastika of lions might show that there was some association, perhaps even an indirect one, between the lion and the sun.

[71] Morenz (1973) p. 179.

[72] Wilkinson (1992) p. 121.

from its use as an image of courage, or to inspire fear in the enemy, as a sphinx, and as a guardian, the lion could also symbolize the deities Shu and Tefnut. In that form, the lions could represent eternity and infinite time.[73] I shall not pursue the matter here, but I suspect that there is a possible link to Phoenicia and through Phoenicia to the Greek Dioskouroi in the fact that Shu and Tefnut could also be depicted as twin children, associated with the uraeus, the "celestial eyes",[74] and the sun barque. They could also aid the deceased in the afterlife.[75]

The Egyptian double lion was known as the deity Aker. It was multivalent, representing the earth and functioning as guardian of the other world (in this regard, Aker stood at the entry to the earth). Among his other aspects, Aker had a role "comme agent de la résurrection du dieu soleil".[76] The association of the lion in other contexts, for example, as the fierce goddess Sekhmet, is well known, but does not concern us. It is sufficient to say that the Egyptian symbolism of lion and lotus tend to lend support to Du Mesnil Du Buisson's interpretation of the lid of the Ahiram sarcophagus, for the mutual relation between Phoenicia and Egypt in religious matters has a lengthy history.[77]

However, it is much harder to give details about the specifically Phoenician ideas of this afterlife. The lid of the sarcophagus aids us in inferring that the Phoenicians of Byblos did have some such conception, at least for royalty in this period. In this respect, the Phoenicians are similar to the Ugaritians and Egyptians.

It has often been observed that references to the "sun", in the phrase "under the sun", appear in the Ešmunazor and Tabnit inscriptions, and that there may be a parallel to the frequent use of that phrase in *Qohelet*.[78] There is, perhaps, a gap of about 500 years

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[73] De Wit (1951) p. 117. See also Wilkinson (1992) p. 69.

[74] These are often said to be the sun and moon. I wonder whether they could also, in some circumstances, be the Morning and Evening Stars.

[75] De Wit (1951) p. 122.

[76] De Wit (1951) pp. 91-106, citing p. 106.

[77] Briefly, see Morenz (1973) pp. 234-236.

[78] For example, in Bonnet (1989) p. 97 and Peckham (1968) pp. 79-80. The phrase also appears in Elam and is restored in an Aramaic inscription from Sefire by Fitzmyer (1995) pp. 116-117.

between Ahiram and these kings,[79] and Ahiram is from Byblos, while they were Sidonian.[80] Yet, similarities between the texts are apparent, and when they are read together, they illuminate the question of "life under the sun". The connections between the texts therefore point to an ideological continuity over time and space.

King Ešmunazor I is believed to have ruled from 479-470 BCE, while his son and successor Tabnit was probably king from 470-465 BCE, and then his son Ešmunazor II, he of the inscription, ruled from 465-451 BCE.[81]

The earliest of these two inscriptions, that of Tabnit, was found in 1887, while the Ešmunazor inscription was found in 1855. Both are upon sarcophagi of Egyptian appearance.[82] Tabnit describes himself as a priest (*khn*) of Ashtart (*ʿštrt*). The inscription basically only identifies the king before moving on to the curse formula. The relevant portions commence at line 6, and read:

> … wʾm pt (line 7) ʾḥ tptḥ ʿlty wrgz trgzn ʾl y[k]n l[k] zrʿ bḥym
> tḥt šm(8)š
> wmškb ʾt rpʾm.[83]

> … and if you open an opening of it (the cover) and disturb a disturbance (then) to [you] there w[il]l not be seed among the living under the sun (or) resting place among the Rephaim.

The cognate infinitive is used (*ptḥ* and *rgz*), as is *ʿlty*, an independent object pronoun.[84] The meaning of the text is clear, and translators tend to interpret the cognate infinitive as an emphatic form: "and if you do open".[85] The parallelism bears the connotation that the life under the sun is complementary to life

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[79] This does not take account of the redating of Ahiram by 100 years or more by Wallenfels (1983). It is not only that his is a lone view: it is that the dating is not critical here, and to discuss his arguments would be time consuming.

[80] I am accepting the dates of 479-470 for Ešmunazor I. The dates of his successors follow. The proposal comes from Peckham (1968) pp. 77-87. It has been accepted by *DCPP* p. 160 and by McCarter in Hallo (2000) p. 182.

[81] There is a table in Peckham (1968) p. 87.

[82] McCarter in Hallo (2000) pp. 181-182 and *SSI* 3, p. 105.

[83] The text can be found at *SSI* 3, pp. 106-109, and at KAI 13.

[84] Krahmalkov (2001) pp. 210 and 114 respectively.

[85] McCarter in Hallo (2000) p. 182.

amongst the Rephaim. If the curse is to be comprehensive, and effective, it cannot provide a loophole, it has to be exhaustive.

In other words, the terms of this inscription establish that a human could expect to have a life under the sun (and to leave descendants there) and a resting place among the Rephaim. They strongly suggest that this is all that we can know; for example, the terms of the inscription rule out the possibility of reincarnation.

The Ešmunazor II inscription opens with a date formula, and then speaks in the name of the deceased himself, describing his sad early death, and like Tabnit, but more elaborately, cursing anyone who would disturb him in death. Relevant portions read:[86]

8 … ʾl ykn lm mškb ʾt rpʾm wʾl yqbr bqbr wʾl ykn lm bn wzrʿa
9 tḥtnm …

11 … wʾyt zrʿ mml<k>t hʾ ʾm ʾdmm hmt ʾl ykn lm šrš lmṭ w
12 pr lmʿal wtʾr bḥym tḥt šmš …

20 … qn my ʾt kl mmlkt wkl ʾdm ʾl yptḥ ʿlty
21 wʾl yʿr ʿlty wʾl yʿmsn bmškb z wʾl yšʾ ʾyt ḥlt mškby lm ysgrnm
22 ʾlnm hqdšm ʾl wyqṣn hmmlkt hʾ whʾdmm hmt wzrʿm lʿlm

Let him have no resting place with the Rephaim, and let him not be buried in a grave (*lit.* "graved in a grave", cognate accusative) and let him have no son or seed after him …

And the seed of that ruler, and as for those men,[87] may there not be to them root below and fruit above nor wealth among the living under the sun …

Whoever you may be,[88] whether royalty or any man at all, let him not open it (sc. the coffin) and let him not empty it, and let him not remove me from this resting place, and let him not take away the coffin in which I rest, lest the holy gods close them up and cut them off, royalty, anyone at all, and their seed, forever.

[86] KAI 14.

[87] *SSI* 3, p. 107, translates: "or those commoners!"

[88] Krahmalkov (2000) p. 428 makes *qn* a man who acquires the "resting place" of the king. This is unlikely, as the statement is addressed to all people, whether royal or not. We must be dealing with an extended use of *qn* here.

Following Krahmalkov, I take *ʾm* in line 11 as a particle introducing an anticipatory clause, meaning, "as for".[89] Incidentally, the curse formula for this inscription ends with a malediction that the desecrating culprits be wiped out forever, *lʿlm*.[90]

From around 400 BCE we have an inscription from the son of Šipiṭbaʿal of Byblos.[91] This relevantly reads:

1 […b]n špṭbʿl mlk gbl pʿlt ly hmškb zn

3 …] y mškb zn ʾš škb bn wbmqm [zn]

6 [… šm]š ʿl[m …]

… The son of Šipiṭbaʿal, king of Byblos made for me this resting place.

… This resting place where I live, in this place …

… The eternal sun …[92]

I suggest that one can abstract a four point schema from reading these four inscriptions together (Ahiram, Tabnit, Ešmunazor II and the son of Šipiṭbaʿal). The common ideas as I see them are:

(I) This passing earthly life is life under the sun (*tḥt šmš*). It is *ephemeral* in the original sense of that word. The best evidence for this comes from the inscription of Ešmunazor II, with its curse that anyone who disturbs the king's grave should have no wealth "among the living under the sun". The concept of life "under the sun" is also found in Tabnit.

(II) This life may be described as life "among the living" (*bḥym*). This is a direct quotation of a phrase found in line 7 of the Tabnit inscription and line 12 of the Ešmunazor inscription.

(III) However, another existence is possible. This is not described as *life*. It is described as having a resting place among the Rephaim (*mškb ʾt rpʾm*). This is found at line 8 of the Tabnit inscription and line 8 of the Ešmunazor

[89] Krahmalkov (2000) p. 59, under *Am* III.

[90] KAI 14, line 22.

[91] KAI 9.

[92] Krahmalkov (2000) p. 372 suggests this restoration. In the funerary context it is difficult to envisage a different restoration.

inscription. The Ahiram inscription does not refer to the Rephaim, but does speak of "his place for eternity".

(IV) This is existence for eternity (*bʿlm*). I refer again to line 1 of the Ahiram sarcophagus. Ahiram is described as having a place in eternity: *šth bʿlm*. Lines 20-22 of the Ešmunazor inscription, make reference to *ʿlm*. This curse formula could simply be wishing unending punishment on despoilers. However, by speaking of "closing up" and "cutting off" them and their seed, it seems to have both the connotation of ceaseless retribution and reprisal in this existence of eternity: *ʿlm*.

I propose fifth, sixth, and seventh points, although point five is not a direct inference from the inscriptions. The evidence for it will be gathered later on. It is furnished here so that the reader has a clear idea of the direction of the thesis.

(V) Existence for eternity is not existence *under* the sun.[93] It is conceived as related to, if not ruled over, by the eternal sun. The eternal sun is the sun we know in a specialized role. This would seem to be the sense of the reference to the eternal sun in the Byblos inscription of the son of Šipiṭbaʿal. That the sun was also known in Phoenician as the eternal sun appears in the Karatepe inscription (although one of the exemplars is written in the Phoenician language, it is of Anatolian provenance, not Phoenician). Its connection with the realm of the dead is also attested. Analogs from Mesopotamia and Egypt are marshalled to support this reading. The realm of the dead may be ruled over by the Rephaim, or by Rešeph, or the eternal sun, or some combination of these. The evidence is not decisive for Mesopotamia. By analogy with other civilizations, especially with Ugarit (as we saw in chapter 7) one might suggest that the likeliest scenario is that the sun conducts the souls of the dead to the netherworld, and probably visits the netherworld each night, but that realm should be viewed as actually ruled by a god of death.

[93] Or, as we shall see in Gilgameš, "with" or "before" the sun.

(VI) The corollary of this is that the sun is a linguistic symbol of both passing time and eternity.[94] There is clear evidence for this in the two phrases *tḥt šmš* and *šmš ʿlm*. In addition, I referred to Iamblichos' theory on time. While Iamblichos' theory suggests parallels with this principle, the evidence is not so clear as to be decisive. Interestingly, I shall later deal with an Egyptian analog to this principle.

(VII) The living and the dead are related. This seventh point follows from the fact that somehow, in some way, disturbing the coffin and its contents, affects the buried person. Although such an act is carried out "among the living", the very idea causes dread to the deceased king who speaks in the inscription. This is apparent from each of the four inscriptions.

The sun is known to have had a funerary role since Ugaritic times. The evidence that this association continued in Phoenicia is set out below (for example, in the *mrzḥ*). As we saw, the phrase "eternal sun" is attested in Ugarit. But it is coeval in Phoenicia. It is attested in the late fourteenth century BCE in one of the El-Amarna letters of Abimilki of Tyre.[95] This letter twice addresses Pharaoh as *šarru* ^{d}*Šamaš da-ri[-tum]*, "the king is eternal Šamaš".[96] While it may be that the writer is adopting Egyptian sentiments, it is nonetheless the case that the writer does use the expression. That is, although he doubtless used the concept of the eternal sun because he thought it would appeal to the king of Egypt, it also made sense to the writer. The better view is, then, that the religious ideas expressed in this letter were current in Phoenicia.

The eternity of the sun is mentioned in the Phoenician language inscription from Karatepe. Although this inscription does not make explicit the chain of thought which lead me to formulate point (V), a consideration of it will render my thesis more plausible.

There are a few other Phoenician inscriptions, but I have not found most them of any relevance. For the sake of completeness,

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[94] Perhaps this is because the sun appears each day, and yet seems always the same, unlike the moon which waxes and wanes.

[95] This passage is noted in several places, e.g., Avigad and Greenfield (1982) p. 126; Bonnet (1989) p. 98.

[96] EA 155, lines 6 and 47, in Knudtzon (1915) pp. 634 and 636.

the major inscriptions which I shall not cover are the inscriptions of or for:

Yḥwmilk of Byblos, ca. 950 BCE;[97]
Abibaʿal of Byblos, ca. 925;[98]
Elibaʿal of Byblos, ca. 900;[99]
Šipiṭbaʿal of Byblos, ca. 900;[100]
Bodʿaštart of Sidon, fifth century;[101]
Baʿalšalem of Sidon, late fifth century;[102] and
Yḥwmilk of Byblos, fifth to fourth centuries.[103]

There is also an inscription, called the inscription of Amrit, although more accurately from a locale near Amrit, dedicated *lʾdny Šdrp*: "to my lord Shadrap". The text is not as interesting as the illustration: a male standing upon a lion, holds a weapon in his right hand and a lion cub in his left. Above the male's head are the solar and lunar disks.[104] The winged sun disk extends along the whole of the top of the stele, and down the upper portion of the sides. The proportions of the figures on the stele are pleasing. The whole is dominated by the striding male, and yet each figure is allowed its own due weight. One can take each detail in isolation or in combination: it always looks deliberate to the eye. The male must be a god, for the lion is standing on mountains (plural). It is difficult to extrapolate anything from this text or the relief, apart from further evidence of a veneration for the sun, and the winged disk is dealt with separately below. This stele is dated to the sixth century BCE by Leriche and Lipinksi.[105] Gubel, however, dates it to between 850 and 750 BCE.[106] For this thesis, nothing turns on which of these dates is correct.

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[97] KAI 4, see also Segert in Hallo (2000) pp. 146-147.
[98] KAI 5 and *SSI* 3, pp. 19-21.
[99] KAI 6 and *SSI* 3, pp. 21-22.
[100] KAI 7 and *SSI* 3, pp. 21-22.
[101] KAI 15. Dated by KAI, vol. 2, p. 23. This is the dedication of the temple of Ešmun in Sidon.
[102] *SSI* 3, pp. 114-116. This inscription is not found in KAI.
[103] KAI 10, *SSI* 3, pp. 93-99.
[104] Gubel (2002) p. 54.
[105] *DCPP* p. 27.
[106] Gubel (2002) p. 51.

A marble inscription from Kition, probably of the fourth century BCE, is unusual in that it relates to commoners. It was erected by one ʾrš for his father, Prsy, and his mother Šmzbl, "where they rest in peace (perhaps literally 'peaceful') for eternity": *ʿl mškb nḥtnm lʿlm* .[107] This confirms, or at the least, is consistent with my point (IV) above.

A different note is struck in the bilingual fourth century BCE inscription from Lapethos in Crete. This is dedicated to *ʿnt mʿz ḥym*: "ʿAnat the bulwark of the living".[108] I have dealt with the significance of the reference to *ḥym* at point (II) above.

The concept that a name may endure for eternity (*ʿlm*), and that this is a desirable thing, is found in two of the inscriptions from near Tyre, dating from 222 BCE and the second half of the second century BCE respectively.[109] The first inscription was fashioned for a temple which had a portico facing towards the rising sun (*mṣʾ šmš*) and seeks a good name for eternity—*šm nʿm lʿlm* .[110] This first phrase means "the rising of the sun", and hence "east".[111] The second was dedicated by a commoner and prays that a good name—*šm nʿm*—under his lord, may be his in eternity—*lʿlm*.[112] The texts are of interest, for they fit into my multi-point framework of Phoenician solar religion.

Perhaps the most individual of all the Phoenician inscriptions to have survived is that of Bitnoam, mother of King Azibaʿal of Byblos. Found in 1929, this remarkable single line was engraved on the queen mother's white marble sarcophagus. *Kanaanäische und Aramäische Inschriften* dates it to around 350 BCE.[113] The inscription is, as usual, in the first person, and informs us who she was,

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[107] KAI 34.

[108] Krahmalkov (2000) omits the "m" from the second word. It is found in KAI 42.

[109] The first of these was probably not originally from Oum el-Amed as is often stated, but from Ma'achouq one and a half kilometres from Tyre: Gubel (2002) pp. 128-129. That one is also KAI 19, the other is not in KAI.

[110] Line 11: Gubel (2002) p. 128.

[111] *DNWSI* pp. 604-605, and Krahmalkov (2000) pp. 303-304.

[112] Lines 6 and 8: Gubel (2002) pp. 137-138.

[113] KAI 11, vol. 2, pp. 15-16. *SSI* 3, pp. 99-100 and *DCPP* would place it in the first half of the fourth century BCE: p. 67.

mentioning that her son, Uzbaʿal,[114] was also the *khn bʿlt* "priest of the Lady", that is, the Lady of Byblos. However, there is no blessing, no curse, and no prayer for Bitnoam herself. Rather, there is a simple declaration that she lies there dressed in *swt*, and with her crown and mouthpiece (both made of gold), such as were worn by all the queens before her: *lmlkyt ʾš kn lpny*. The word *swt* refers to a garment, a cloth or a bandage. In this case, Krahmalkov opts for "garment".[115]

This is a rather colorless translation next to Lipinski's. He would have the good queen reclining "in the purple", basing himself upon reasonable evidence that the *swt*—at least in this case—was a purple cloth.[116] The inscription is useful if only for reminding us that not every deceased member of royalty was more concerned with pious emotions than with the appearance they cut, or more precisely, announced that they were cutting, in death. But it may well be significant that she speaks in the first person: this may be a convention, but even if it is, it may yet be a convention which shows that to the Phoenicians, physical death was not the end of the individual. In some fashion, they could still "speak" from the grave. Given the absence of any blessings or curses, I suspect that there was once another, perhaps larger inscription, with such sentiments, although I suspect that for this lady the standard formulas were refreshed.

The Phoenician funerary inscriptions provide meagre evidence, but nonetheless, sufficient to have clearly extrapolated a number of points about Phoenician notions of the afterlife which serve as a satisfactory framework for the understanding of other Phoenician funerary inscriptions. The next task is to analyse the other evidence for the Phoenician solar religion.

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[114] The likeliest vocalizations are Uzbaʿal, Azzibaʿal or Azbaʿal: Swiggers (1980) pp. 112-113.

[115] Krahmalkov (2000) pp. 340-341; and Swiggers (1980) pp. 114-115.

[116] *DCPP* p. 360.

CHAPTER 9
PHOENICIAN SOLAR RELIGION: MISCELLANEOUS EVIDENCE

I now deal with the miscellaneous evidence for the sun in ancient Phoenician religion. The enumeration of headings continues on from the previous chapter.[1]

(3) THE KARATEPE INSCRIPTIONS

Karatepe, a fortified hill in Cilicia, Turkey, was the heart of a kingdom composed of diverse elements, possibly chiefly Hurrian and Hittite. However, one cannot exclude the possibility of a strong Aramaean component.[2] The ruler in the inscribed texts, Azitawada, who was probably also subsidiary to some other higher king, had these inscriptions engraved between 760 and 750 BCE.[3] The inscriptions are in two languages, being engraved in Phoenician and in hieroglyphic Luwian, on massive basalt orthostats.[4] The Phoenician inscription is also repeated on a statue. As *DCPP* wryly notes, the Luwian deities are referred to here in an *interpretatio Phoenicia*.[5]

The text below is found partly on column 3, but also extending onto the base of the inscription, then onto the lion. I cite here the curse formula, designed to deter kings, princes, and powerful men from erasing Azitawada's name, and arrogating it for themselves. The curse relevantly reads:[6]

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[1] It is not usual to continue the enumeration of such points across a break of chapters, but I have done so because in future work I intend to return to these items. There have now been three studies devoted to the sun in Phoenician religion, and the same points reappear in these, in different order. By allocating a number for each discrete point, it is easier to keep a track of the evidence for solar religion in Phoenicia.

[2] Winter (1979) pp. 138, 139, and 141.

[3] *SSI* 3, p. 44.

[4] Winter (1979) p. 116.

[5] *DCPP* p. 243.

[6] Röllig (1999) p. 54.

A III 18	… bʿl šmm w ʾl qn ʾrṣ
(on the bases)	wšmš ʿlm wkl dr bn ʾlm ʾyt hmmlkt hʾ wʾyt hmlk hʾ wʾyt
A IV 1	ʾdm hʾ ʾš ʾdm šm ʾps šm ʾztwd ykn lʿlm km šm šmš wyrḥ

(May) Baal Shamem, and El creator of the earth,

And the eternal sun, and all the family of the gods (eradicate)
the person of royal lineage (or) the king (or) that

Man who is man of some reputation. *However*,[7]
The name of Azitawada shall be for eternity, like the name
of Šamaš and Yariḥ.

As Bonnet notes, these lines refer to *bʿl šmm*, then *ʾl qn ʾrṣ*, and the sun. They thus invoke three major primordial deities, heaven, earth, and sun, before the text proceeds to any other god.[8]

It is instructive to compare this passage with the Luwian text. This reads, at lines 73-75:

May celestial Tarhunza,[9] the celestial Sun, Ea and all the gods
delete that kingdom,
and that king, and that man!
Hereafter may Azitawada's name continue to stand for all ages,
as the moon's and the sun's name stands![10]

It is apparent that the Phoenician and Luwian texts are not simply translations, one of the other. Interestingly, the name Azitawada is composed of two elements, *aza-* "love" and *Tiwat*, the name of the sun god. The Luwian inscription opens by saying that he is "the Sun-blessed man",[11] whereas the Phoenician reads: *ʾnk ʾztwd hbrk bʿl ʿbd bʿl.*[12] "I am Azitawada, the *abarakku* of Baal, the

[7] The sense of *ʾps* is contrastive: Krahmalkov (2000) p. 69.
[8] Bonnet (1989) p. 98.
[9] A storm god, equated with Phoenician Baal: Hawkins in Hallo (1997) p. 125, n. 10.
[10] Hawkins in Hallo (1997) p. 126.
[11] Hawkins in Hallo (1997) p. 125.
[12] A I 1 and 2, Röllig (1999) p. 50.

servant of Baal".[13] This indicates, I think, that the terms of the Phoenician inscription have been influenced by Phoenician usage and concepts. Another indicator of this is that in the Luwian the sun is said to be "celestial", while the Phoenician uses the phrase, which we have seen has an ancient cognate relative in Ugarit, *šmš ʿlm* .[14] It is also interesting that while the moon (or more precisely, the name Yariḥ) is clearly thought of as everlasting, it is not given the epithet of *ʿlm* . That is reserved for the sun when it is named in the exalted trinity. As we saw, Šapšu was also known as "sun and moon" at Ugarit, raising the possibility that here the reference is not to the sun and to the moon as such, but to the sun deity under the title "sun and moon".

Whatever the situation in this respect, it does appear that the Phoenician inscription is more than an equivalent of the Luwian, as it includes specifically Phoenician elements. This makes sense, for as Winter suggests, it was meant to be read by Phoenicians: those passing through for trade purposes, and those agents responsible for that commerce.[15]

It is worth noting the phrase: "The name of Azitawada shall be for eternity, like the name of Šamaš and Yariḥ". The Phoenicians referred to the celestial bodies as symbols and exemplars of eternity. As we shall see in the Pyrgi inscription below, the stars were invoked in this respect.

(4) ATHENIAN BILINGUAL INSCRIPTION

A bilingual inscription found at Athens, and dating to about 400 BCE, reads from the Phoenician section:

mṣbt skr bḥym lʿbdTanit bn ʿbdšmš hṣdny

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[13] Younger, in Hallo (1997) p. 149, n. 2 notes that the meaning of *hbrk* is obscure. The arguments in Röllig (1999) p. 58 for *abarakku*, "chief steward", seem sound.

[14] Lipinski (1995b) p. 265 is of the view that this epithet may perhaps mean "Soleil de l'univers", but he concedes that this sense of the word *ʿlm* belongs to a later age.

[15] Winter (1979) p. 139.

> A memorial stele, (set up) among the living, for Abd Tanit, son of Abd Šmš, the Sidonian.[16]

In the Greek inscription, which only provides the names, *ʿbd Tanit* is rendered as "Artemidoros" and *ʿbd šmš* as "Heliodoros".[17] This also attests Šamaš in a personal name, and is consistent with point (II) of the doctrines abstracted in the previous chapter.

(5) SUN DISKS

Black and Green are, in my view, justifiably cautious when they state: "Both the origins and meaning of the winged solar disk are matters of controversy".[18] In their opinion, this symbol was transmitted from Egypt to Mesopotamia by the medium of Syria and the Hittites.[19] However, there is also the possibility that it was originally a Hittite symbol, and spread from Hatti to Egypt.[20] If this is so, then it will have arrived in Phoenicia by about 1800 BCE, or within a hundred years of that time. It entered Mesopotamian art at some time in the second millennium BCE: Collon opines that the entry was probably effected in the period 1800-1700.[21]

In Egypt, the winged sun disk was understood as combining the sun disk of Re and the wings of the Horus falcon, and thus came about the composite deity Re-Harakhty, although it could also be read as symbol of Horus, especially as Horus Behdety.[22] In the present state of our knowledge, this symbol seems to have been known in Egypt in the Old Kingdom (Dynasty 5), which would make a Hittite or Anatolian origin less likely. It is to be distinguished from the simple sun disk.[23] Although in Babylon and Sumer the sun disk was generally a symbol of the sun god Šamaš,

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[16] *SSI* 3, pp. 147-148, where Gibson translates: "Pillar of remembrance among the living …". Compare Krahmalkov's translation: "<This is> the memorial stele among the living of Abdtinnit son of Abdsemes the Sidonian".

[17] *SSI* 3, p.148.

[18] Black and Green (1992) p. 185.

[19] Black and Green (1992) pp. 185-186.

[20] Van Buren (1945) pp. 94-97.

[21] Collon (1995) p. 96. Collon writes "about this time", but I think that a fair reading of the context suggests 1800-1700.

[22] Wilkinson (1992) p. 101.

[23] Wilkinson (1992) pp. 101 and 129.

in Assyria it was a symbol of Aššur.[24] In Assyria it was also sometimes shown with three gods, one in the middle, and one on each wing. The identity of these deities is not known, but scholarly speculation would identify them with Anu, Aššur for Enlil, and Ea. The winged sun disk may even have been, on occasions, a symbol of Ninurta.[25] Indeed, Dalley concludes in respect of the Mesopotamian and Hittite evidence, that:

> We can perhaps deduce from this, that although the winged disk is a form of the sun god, it can be applied like the written title ^{d}UTUši to any god, goddess or mortal who is elected or appointed to be sovereign.[26]

This is a useful reminder that when we come to Phoenicia, while the disk certainly portrays the sun, it cannot be assumed that the sun could never be used as a symbol of any deity other than Šamaš. In Egypt, Re was, for much of its history, the greatest of the Egyptian gods. This applies whether he was considered by himself, or as identified with Horus or Amon. Even in later periods he was one of the major deities there. Although, given the ubiquity of Egyptian influence in Phoenician art, one might assume that the deity in Phoenicia would be—as in Egypt—the chief sun deity, this was not necessarily the case. As we shall see below, in Phoenicia other deities could have solar connections. Also, Egyptian influence notwithstanding, the sun never became the chief goddess (if it was female) in Phoenicia. Aštart was always far more popular.[27] So while the example of Egyptian art was powerful in Phoenicia, the adoption of a symbol or deity in Phoenicia also reflects a Phoenician receptivity to that particular religious phenomenon.

When the winged sun disk was adopted in Phoenicia, it appeared on all types of art, ranging from the monumental to steles, ivories, and scarabs.[28] In the book prepared for the 1988

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[24] There is some controversy around this point. Some of the winged sun disk iconography associated with Aššur may in fact properly depict Šamaš: Bienkowski and Millard (2000) p. 264 but compare p. 36.

[25] Van Buren (1945) pp. 89-103 and Green (1995) p. 1838.

[26] Dalley (1986) p. 99.

[27] It is not certain that Aštart was the Lady of Byblos: Lipinski (1995) p. 75. Even if they were related, the Lady of Byblos (Baʿalat Gubal) may have been a distinct manifestation of Aštart: Markoe (2000) pp. 117-118.

[28] *DCPP* p. 131.

exhibit at the Palazzo Grassi, one can find several examples of unadorned sun disks. However, winged examples feature on the following artifacts:

seventh century BCE bronze harness from Salamis (the Šalmiya of Ugarit);[29]
sixth century BCE limestone capital from Paphos on Cyprus;[30]
fifth century BCE Stele of Yḥwmilk of Byblos;[31]
fifth century BCE terracotta plaque, no location;[32]
third or second century marble stele from Oum el-Amed;[33]
second century BCE limestone stele from Tyre;[34] and
first century BCE three-sided stele from Arwad.[35]

These disks have been found all over the Phoenician and Punic world, from Phoenicia proper to Palestine to Carthage and even in Sulcis in Sardinia.[36] A bronze seal located from Hurbat Rosh Zayit, Lower Galilee, in present day Israel, is centered on a depiction of the winged sun disk. Dated to the tenth or ninth centuries BCE, it was found in a domestic building near a Phoenician fortress, and comprises an oval cartouche-like frame, subdivided into several registers. The other registers feature two eyes of Horus, an ankh, and two Horus falcons. The palmette with the bud emerging from the leaves, together with its artistic and stylistic qualities (including the method of lead inlay), and the circumstances of its location, mark the seal as Phoenician. It may have been an ornament for furniture, or simply an unusual seal, but it seems to have been some type of "official (royal? ritual?) symbolic object".[37]

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[29] Moscati (1988) p. 193 and in color at p. 220. The disk itself has a female face. This is the Salamis in Cyprus.

[30] Moscati (1988) p. 222.

[31] Moscati (1988) p. 365.

[32] Moscati (1988) p. 148. The nail holes are still visible in the middle of the top, and are flanked by lions.

[33] Moscati (1988) p. 367.

[34] Moscati (1988) p. 365.

[35] Moscati (1988) p. 361.

[36] Lipinski (1991) p. 63.

[37] Gal (1994) pp. 27, 30, and 31, quoting p. 31.

There is a theory, but it is no more than that, that a winged disk made of gold is referred to in line 5 of the Yḥwmlk inscription from Byblos.[38] Dalley accepts that this is so, and although the reconstruction of the word in Yḥwmlk is controversial, Dalley—partly in reliance upon the reading of 2 Kings 11:42—reads its Phoenician name as *ʿdt*.[39]

(6) THE SIGN OF TANIT

A series of depictions of the sign of Tanit comprises Figure 3. Lipinski notes that the rays of the sun appear above the "sign of Tanit" on some steles found at El-Hofra[40] near Cirta (also known as Constantine, the capital of the Numidian kings from the third century BCE).[41] However, Lipinski does not say what he makes of this. As one would expect of a North African town, the culture displayed at El-Hofra had cultural affinities with the culture in Carthage.[42] El-Hofra's claim to fame is the 850 steles of its tophet, consecrated to Baal Hammon.[43] A crescent is clearly present above the "head" of the example from Carthage reproduced in Lancel.[44]

I think that there is some significance in these facts. Tanit is known to have had a complex character, including celestial and fertility features, warlike traits, and even chthonic associations.[45] She comes into view in Phoenicia at some point between the eighth to the end of the seventh century BCE,[46] and then in Carthage in the next century.[47] Indeed, the rise of Baal Hammon and Tanit to preeminence in Punic religion is one of the chief factors which

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[38] *SSI* 3, p. 94 and note on p. 97.

[39] Dalley (1986) p. 92.

[40] Lipinski (1991) pp. 62-63.

[41] Hvidberg-Hansen (1979) p. 45.

[42] Krings (1995) p. 816. Also *DCPP* p. 118: "Les symboles sont ceux des stèles de Carthage …". There was probably migration from Carthage to Cirta after Carthage's destruction: Hvidberg-Hansen (1979) p. 45.

[43] *DCPP* pp. 117-118.

[44] Lancel (1995) p. 203, figure 107.

[45] Hvidberg-Hansen (1979) pp. 23-27; *DCPP* p. 438; and Bonnet and Xella (1995) p. 332.

[46] Maier (1986) pp. 98-99.

[47] *DCPP* p. 438. Lancel (1995) p. 200. The temple at Sarepta which an ivory fragment shows to have been dedicated to Tanit-Astarte might be as early as the eighth century BCE: Krings (1995) p. 125.

distinguishes it from the Phoenician cults.[48] All commentators recognize the family resemblance, as it were, to Astarte.[49] Hvidberg-Hansen made the suggestion that Tanit developed some of her aspects from the Ugaritic Astarte (i.e., Aṯtirat), but that her name derived from ʿAnat, the Ugaritic and Phoenician deity, and that certain features associated with Tanit could have come only from ʿAnat.[50]

The discovery of a shrine of Tanit-Astarte at Sarepta in Phoenicia, which predated the Punic developments, is said to lend overwhelming support to the older theory. It seems true that Hvidberg-Hansen's theory has not gained general acceptance.[51] However, I am not convinced that the Sarepta inscription ends the debate. It was a feature of Phoenician religion, and also, one might add, of Ugaritic, that there could be "joint deities". The following examples are known from Phoenicia: Sid-Melqart, Sid-Tanit (note that Sid is male), Ešmun-Melqart, Ešmun-Astarte (again, Ešmun is male), and more.[52] Does this mean that these deities are all derived one from the other? I would think, on balance, that there is still scope for scholarly debate concerning the nature of Tanit, the etymology of her name, and her origins.[53]

While the "Sign of Tanit" is often associated with the goddess, it can also be independent of her, or so it is said.[54] Indeed,

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[48] Bonnet and Xella (1995) p. 322.

[49] *DCPP* pp. 437-438; Bonnet and Xella (1995) p. 326.

[50] Hvidberg-Hansen (1979) pp. 115-118, 123-126, 131-133, and 137-143.

[51] Krings (1995) p. 101; Lancel (1995) p. 200.

[52] Bonnet and Xella (1995) p. 323.

[53] For the sake of completeness, Lipinski (1995a) p. 440 suggests that the composite deity Ešmun-Melqart in Kition must have originally been a Cypriote deity, and that because no one Phoenician deity approximated to his attributes, two Phoenician gods had to be combined in the *interpretatio Phoenicia*. This may be so, but I am not sure it would explain the other joint deities, many of whom were worshipped in Phoenicia. One would have to contend that they were all foreign deities. But there is a more basic problem, and a more interesting observation. Ešmun and Melqart were associated chiefly with Sidon and Tyre respectively. This "fused" deity suggests a linking of the traditions of these two cities, for whatever reason.

[54] *DCPP* p. 439.

some of the earliest representations of the sign appear to be male.[55] Despite the fact that many of the illustrations are accompanied by the inscription *tnt pnbʿl*, the sign occasionally appears in Cirta, where Tanit was probably not the subject of any special cult. However, the shrines at Cirta belong to Baal Addir and Baal Hammon.[56] As Krahmalkov notes, Tanit was often "paired" with Baal Hammon.[57] Further, Baal Hammon seems to have probably been identical with Baal Addir,[58] which is probably only an epithet, since *ʾdr* means "great, powerful, mighty".[59] Further, I am not convinced that scholars can be certain that there was no cult of Tanit at Cirta: at the risk of sounding trite and repetitive, absence of evidence is not evidence of absence.

Punic iconography can show Tanit with rays and wings and as a young woman who is sometimes pregnant.[60] Hvidberg-Hansen notes that Tanit is sometimes depicted with a lion's head, thus showing her warrior quality.[61] One might add to this that the lion could have celestial attributes in Phoenicia, being able to function as a symbol of the sunrise, and thus the sun, and eternal life.[62] Her associate, Baal Hammon, also had solar associations.[63] Drawings of the sign vary so much, while identifiably still the Sign of Tanit, that the only conclusion can be, in my view, that it came to be—if it did not originate as—a deliberately mutable and adaptable symbol.[64] This would explain why it can apparently be disassociated from the goddess—at least to some extent.

I am not certain how far the sign can be dissociated from the goddess, for while it may have been used in shrines dedicated to other deities, these were, as noted, related to Tanit. Further, if the

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[55] Barnett (1989) p. 6*.

[56] Barnett (1989) p. 11* n. 34.

[57] Krahmalkov (2000) pp. 495-496.

[58] Xella (1991) pp. 67 and 79.

[59] Krahmalkov (2000) p. 36, under ADR III.

[60] Barnett (1989) 7*; Hvidberg-Hansen (1979) pp. 121-122.

[61] Hvidberg-Hansen (1979) pp. 121-122.

[62] See the discussion of the Ahiram inscription above.

[63] Lancel (1995) pp. 197-198. For two Palmyrene Aramaic inscriptions in which a *ḥmn* (perhaps "une sorte de chapelle, de petit temple et/ou peut-être de baldequin") was dedicated to Šamaš, see Xella (1991) pp. 206, 210 and 229 on the *ḥmn*.

[64] There is also a theory, not at all impossible, that it originated from the Egyptian *ankh*: *DCPP* p. 417.

sign was understood to signify the goddess, then whenever and wherever it was used, it surely evoked a connection with her, even if it bore additional affinities by reason of a few deft strokes. It may be that the connection with the goddess became indirect, but nonetheless remained real. Today we are accustomed to abstract depictions of females in dresses. These present as triangles with stick limbs and a head, and are drawn in contradistinction to stick drawings of males. I have found little comparable in Phoenician art. Phoenician and Punic males wore loose robes. The discovery of images of Baal Hammon shows that he was depicted as wearing "a long and loose fitting tunic in oriental style".[65] It is beyond doubt that there are Phoenician drawings of humans with a regular triangular body. But I am not sure how we are to distinguish the male from the female. That this is not mere pedantry is demonstrated by the fact that some of the earlier "Sign of Tanit" figures seem to have been male.

I wish to emphasize that despite the considerations above, it still seems to me that the sign did originally represent a female deity: after all, it is so often and so clearly associated with Tanit that any other view would be idiosyncratic. Maier's observation that it may even be a "continuation" of the typical illustration of Qudšu may be correct, without necessarily meaning that Tanit was herself the goddess Qudšu.[66] However, it appears possible that the sign came to be used to develop other associations *in addition* to that of the goddess Tanit. If we put aside modern conceptions, then, to my eye, the figure in its most abstract form can, on occasions, present (from the base up) mountain, sky, and sun. Figure 3(16) is clearly a "sign of Tanit". However, the disk has been reduced to a semi-circle marked by parallel curving lines, and the horizontal bar has been curved at each end to represent the sun rising between

[65] Lancel (1995) p. 198.

[66] Maier (1986) pp. 102-107. Here, and in his study of the sign of the caduceus (pp. 110-115), Maier tends to be absolute in his treatment of the ancient deities, and almost treats his investigation as if he were a detective surveying a photo-board of suspects. This assumes that the gods had fixed identities, or a symbol only one interpretation, and that is not a safe assumption.

two hills, as is attested in both Egyptian and Mesopotamian art.[67] In this instance, a solar significance has been added and made paramount. Figures 3(17) and 3(18) are clearly celestial, depicting moon and sun. In 3(18) there is an inverted heart shape inside the triangle; however, it seems to be a leaf, for a clearer picture shows that it is supported by a tendril.[68] Does this perhaps support the view that the triangle could be seen as a mountain? Could it be a metaphor, given Barnett's data about Tanit as a young pregnant woman, for the foetus, the "life inside", so to speak?[69] If the triangle represents—in this instance—a mountain, it may also stand for the earth, especially when depicted with a leaf, or with symbols of the sky and sun, moon, or stars.

If my theory about the two different "times" of Phoenician spirituality is correct, then we actually have here in figure 3(16) a depiction of *life under the sun together with the eternal sun*, which serenely presides over the whole. It is precisely because this abstract figure is so rich, and yet so plastic, that it can serve to accommodate other religious concepts. For example, it is also seen as representing a person with arms outstretched or an altar, and can be combined with other symbols.[70] I had already articulated this opinion, when I became aware, at second hand, that Cirtas had also contended that the sign was multi-valent, and, in his words, "oecumenical". However, he attributed this to "the cast of mind which tries to combat the greatest number of evils simultaneously …".[71] In other words, in his view, the sign is adaptable because of the thoroughgoing superstition of its users. In my view, the flexibility may be attributed to this in part, but also in part, it is a function of the sophistication of the Phoenician and Punic world, where artists and audience could read and write into the sign a rich and multi-layered approach to life and death.

Perhaps the more exalted view of the sign is defensible. *DCPP* cites early examples of the sign from Tyre which do not have the base line, and concludes:

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[67] The sun rising from a valley is the original of the Sumerogram "UTU", the name of the sun deity: Labat (1988) p. 174 (#381) and is very similar to the Egyptian *akhet* symbol: Wilkinson (1992) p. 135.

[68] Lancel (1995) p. 203, figure 107.

[69] Barnett (1989) p. 7*.

[70] *DCPP* pp. 416-417.

[71] Cited in Barnett (1989) p. 11*, n. 33.

> Le signe de Tanit serait alors un intermédiaire entre le monde terrestre et le monde céleste figuré par le croissant et le disque.[72]

This supports my theory: that is, the sign symbolically unites the celestial and earthly poles. It would therefore be an appropriate figure for use in conjunction with the practice of sacrifice (if indeed this was the case, as many scholars think).[73] To my mind, the clearest recent account of the "Sign of Tanit" is Barnett's.[74] I note that scholars rarely refer to this article. While I am unconvinced by his reconstruction of a process whereby a Punic priesthood, influenced by the great grain fields of North Africa, merged Phoenician and Egyptian motifs, yet his account of the development of the sign, with its diversity, bears his customary lucidity and mastery of art history.

I wish to reiterate that I have little doubt that the sign generally represented the goddess: I am contending only that, at the least, it *became* a flexible sign, which on at least one occasion was clearly redrawn to express solar concepts.

(7) THE *MRZḤ* (*MZRḤ*)

While much of our evidence for the cultic life of Phoenicia has disappeared, one cult association, the *mrzḥ*, has left some traces. Markoe describes it as "a religious association centered on a particular god or temple complex", and translates the Punic word as "place of reunion".[75] It is known from Ugarit and Israel as an association, which was probably the forerunner of the Greek θίασος, meeting to celebrate feasts and funeral banquets.[76] The idea that it concerned only funeral banquets seems to be based upon only one portion of the evidence.[77] Many social and cultural associations have been formed which have exercised identical

[72] *DCPP* p. 417.

[73] *DCPP* pp. 296-297. These scholars refer to child sacrifice.

[74] The absence of this article from the bibliography in Krings (1995) and *DCPP*, is puzzling.

[75] Markoe (2000) p. 120.

[76] Markoe (2000) p. 120. However, see Pardee's warning against interpreting the Ugaritic evidence too generously: Pardee (1996).

[77] Lewis (1989) pp. 80-94.

functions upon different occasions, one need only think of singers, who can perform at various events, from weddings to cremations.

Two points should be noted: first, there may well have been other religious associations, for there were several types of cultural associations in the Phoenician and Punic world. However, the *mrzḥ* is the only religious association for which we have any significant evidence.[78] Secondly, one of these cultural associations was confusingly named the *mzrḥ*. Krahmalkov has separate entries for *mzrḥ* and *mrzḥ*, and warns that the two are not to be confused.[79] With regard to the *mzrḥ*, Krahmalkov is uncertain of the etymology, but defines it as a "men's sodality".[80] The *mrzḥ ʾlm* , similarly, is a "kind of men's sodality".[81]

Basing himself, I believe, upon *Kanaanäische und Aramäische Inschriften* 69, Krahmalkov states that the full name of the *mrzḥ* is *mrzḥ ʾlm*, indicating association with the cult of a particular deity".[82] That text mentions both terms, and bears out Krahmalkov's distinction. The text from Marseilles, *Kanaanäische und Aramäische Inschriften* 69, was in fact originally a Carthaginian inscription, and so is evidence for the existence of both sodalities in Punic areas.[83]

The most important piece of evidence for the *mrzḥ*, which is our concern, is probably the fourth century bronze bowl with a carinated upper half, of unknown provenance, but possibly hailing from Phoenicia or Cyprus,[84] with a Phoenician inscription.[85] It seems to follow from this inscription that the *mrzḥ Šmš* is the name of an association. While Šamaš has underworld connections, these are not his or her only associations. I see no reason to restrict the reading of this inscription to a funerary context. However, this is all conjectural. These bowls are of a type which was universally used

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[78] A point made by Baslez in *DCPP* p. 45, under "associations religieuses".

[79] Krahmalkov (2000) pp. 311-312.

[80] Krahmalkov (2000) p. 274, noting that "mrzḥ" in Amos 6:7 is an error for "mzrḥ".

[81] Krahmalkov (2000) p. 311.

[82] Krahmalkov (2000) p. 311.

[83] Avigad and Greenfield (1982) p. 126.

[84] So Grottanelli (1988) p. 249 who has made an extensive study of metal artifacts in the Phoenician world.

[85] Lipinski (1991) p. 62.

throughout the ancient world for drinking. As Avigad and Greenfield note, they are appropriate gifts for such a sodality.[86]

Finally, there is *Kanaanäische und Aramäische Inschriften* 60 from the Piraeus near Athens. This opens with the words: *bym 4 lmzḥ* … "on the fourth day of the *mrzḥ*". Does this mean that *mrzḥ* could also be the name of a feast observed by the members which lasted for four days or more? Lipinski believes it more likely to also be the name of a month amongst the Sidonians in the Piraeus.[87] There is other evidence, but I am not concerned to conduct a full enquiry into the *mrzḥ*.

What then does the *mrzḥ* tell us? It shows that these associations, which seem to have been in possession of some serious wealth, appear to have had a special veneration for Šamaš. This points to the association of Šamaš not only with death, but also with life, in Phoenicia. It is another marker of the continuity between Ugarit and Phoenicia.

(8) TEMPLES AND BETYLS

It will not occasion any surprise to learn that there was probably a temple of Šamaš at Carthage.[88] It is suprising, however, that no Phoenician temple specifically devoted to Šamaš seems to be known. There is reason to believe that another one was associated with a betyl.[89] Given the evidence about the importance of the betyl for the sun worship of Emesa and Baalbek, one would perhaps expect that any sun temple would have a betyl. As Xella has forcefully contended, we should be open to the possibility that the name *ʾbnšmš* may refer to a betyl. This would make sense of Ugaritic text KTU 1.100 where the foal is (amongst other things) the daughter of Šapšu and of the *ʾbn*.[90]

Although there is evidence that betyls could be identified with the sun cult (Emesa and Baalbek are the clearest examples), it

[86] Avigad and Greenfield (1982) pp. 121-123.

[87] *DCPP* p. 275.

[88] Bonnet (1989) p. 101; Lipinski (1991) p. 62.

[89] Bonnet (1989) p. 101.

[90] Xella (1988) pp. 389-390. He deals there with proposals to interpret and amend the name *ʾbnšmš*. Lipinksi in *DCPP*, p. 70, accepts *ʾbn* as including the sense of "betyl" within its semantic range.

would seem that they could be associated with almost any deity.[91] I return to the betyl at topic (17), the phoenix.

(9) CITY NAMES

There was a city of Phoenicia named Samsimuruna. Stephen of Byzantium also refers to a Phoenician city Σάμφη (Samphe).[92] By themselves, these are not tremendously important points of evidence.[93] The first city is known as a toponym in certain Assyrian inscriptions of the seventh century BCE, and was probably in the same area as Sidon, Byblos, and Arwad.[94]

(10) A MONTH NAMED AFTER THE SUN

Three inscriptions attest the name of the month *zbḥ šmš*, "sacrifice for the sun/Šamaš". These date from the sixth or fifth century BCE in Pyrgi, from about 300 BCE in Kition, and from the third century BCE in Larnaka-tis-Lapithou.[95]

Pyrgi (once Cerveteri, the main Etruscan city, now the modern Santa-Severa)[96] is known to have been the main port for the area of Caere, and to have had two sanctuaries to Apollo. Its culture was cosmopolitan, with strong Greek influence. Young Romans would be sent there to learn Etruscan writing, probably from the sixth century, until at least the end of the fourth century BCE.[97] The three gold plaques (two in Etruscan, one in Phoenician) had been hidden in a niche between the temple from which they came, and another temple, together with a "mysterious fourth inscribed sheet of bronze". Our plaques had probably been fixed to a door, by bronze nails with gold heads.[98] They are believed to date from about the time of the founding of the temple

[91] *DCPP* pp. 70-71.

[92] Bonnet (1989) p. 98.

[93] Another "city of the sun" was in fact Heliopolis in Egypt, and not a Phoenician town at all: Lipinski (1995b) p. 268.

[94] *DCPP* p. 387.

[95] Lipinski (1991) p. 62; Bonnet (1989) p. 104.

[96] Heurgon (1966) p. 3.

[97] Heurgon (1966) pp. 3-4 and 8.

[98] Heurgon (1966) pp. 5-6.

in the sixth century BCE.[99] The relevant portion of the Pyrgi inscription reads:[100]

lrbt lʿštrt ʾšr qdš
ʾz ʾš pʿl wʾš ytn
tbryʾ wlnš mlk ʿl
kyšryʾ. byrḥ zbḥ
šmš bmtn ʾbbt …

… šnt km hkkbm
ʾl

To the Lady, to Ashtart, this holy place (sacred Asher),[101]
Which he accomplished,[102] and which he gave,
Thebarie Velanus, king of
Kisry[103] in the month of Sacrifice(s)
Of the Sun, as a gift to her temple …
(may it last)
years as the stars
of Il (or El).

The text is a nest of difficulties, not all of which are relevant here.[104] The important phrases are the reference to the month of the sacrifice(s) of the sun, and to the stars of Il. First, as Knoppers notes and McCarter accepts, the word *zbḥ* here may be, and probably is, a plural.[105] However, it may be descriptive, "the month of sacrifice" may mean "the special month of sacrifice". Whichever reading is adopted, we seem to have here either a month of

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[99] Acquaro in Moscati (1988) pp. 612-613.

[100] *SSI* 3, p. 154.

[101] On "sacred asher" see Krahmalkov (2000) pp. 85-86. It may well be the cult statue, as Krahmalkov writes under the entry *ʾšr*, but at pp. 39 and 320 he translates the same phrase as "this holy place". Guzzo (1995) p. 672 opts for "sacred place" but notes that the meaning is not clear. I have accepted the conclusion of Knoppers (1992) p. 109, using comparative material.

[102] Knoppers (1992) is correct to translate this as "completed" p. 106. I prefer to use one of the glosses from Krahmalkov (2000) p. 402, *pʿl* 4.

[103] Heurgon (1966) p. 10 states that Kisry is "an obsolete but attested form for Caere".

[104] The reader is referred to Knoppers (1992) and Heurgon (1966) for deeper analysis.

[105] Knoppers (1992) p. 110, McCarter in Hallo (2000) p. 184, n. 4.

ongoing sacrifices to, or a month in which there is a particularly important sacrifice to the sun.

Second, there is the question of the stars. The text had always been translated "these stars", for *'l* is known to have meant "these" in Phoenician.[106] Then, in a short article, Dahood pointed out that the phrase had no context: to which stars does it refer? There is a reasonably analogous passage in Isaiah 14:13, lacking only the mimation of *kkb*, for "stars". Dahood referred to other Biblical passages to support his contention that we are here dealing with one variant of an established literary metaphor. On the basis of Ugaritic and Biblical Hebrew, he proposed that the mimation reflected an enclitic *mem* between the "*regens* and the genitive of a construct chain".[107] In Numbers 21:14 he found an example where he repointed a word which was preceded by the definite article and was used in a construct sequence, to provide himself with an enclitic *mem*.[108]

I am not so persuaded by the Hebrew and Ugaritic parallels, although they must of course be considered; nor by the argument that "enclitic *mem* was probably not a live feature at this time in Phoenician and Punic".[109] Our sample is too small for this "probably". Knoppers states that none of Dahood's examples contain the enclitic particle.[110] I am not sure if Knoppers was dismissing or silently passing over the example from Numbers, because Dahood repointed it. However, while I am not at all sure of what the *mem* is, or that it must be the enclitic *mem*, Dahood's suggestion for the reading does at least allow the context its full weight. Knoppers agrees that this must be a reference to the stars of the heavens.[111] If so, how can it possibly be "these" stars? It is for this reason that other scholars have speculated that there may be decorative stars. But this is no solution. The whole point of the phrase is that Thebarie Velanus prays that his building will last perpetually; not merely that it will weather time and elements as well as he anticipates that the furnishings will.

[106] Krahmalkov (2000) p. 50, *Al* III.
[107] Dahood (1965) p. 171.
[108] Dahood (1965) p. 172.
[109] Knoppers (1992) p. 118.
[110] Knoppers (1992) p. 118.
[111] Knoppers (1992) p. 119.

The matter is by no means free of doubt, but I suggest that we have here a reference to the "stars of Il" and the belief that these lasted forever.

Having examined this, the question remains, what do we know of the month of the sacrifices to Šamaš? In a recent article, Stieglitz has gathered in one place all of the evidence pertaining to the Phoenician and Punic menology. He reconstructs the calendar to show that it commenced in the season of spring, and the month of *zbḥ šmš* was the third month of the year, thus falling around June.[112]

There is also an enigmatic text from Larnaka-tis-Lapithou in Cyprus, which some have thought named a new month, but which in fact refers to *zbḥ šmš*. A lengthy votive inscription, it relevantly reads:[113]

1 mš lnʿm …
4 bḥdš zbḥ ššm ʾš bšnt …
6 … byrḥ mpʿ
11 ʿl ḥyy wʿl ḥy zrʿy ym md ym wlṣmh ṣdq wlʾštw wlʾdmy
12 [bḥd]šm wbksʾm yrḥ md yrḥ ʿd ʿlm …

1 A statue for prosperity …
4 On the new moon of the month of *zbḥ ššm* …
6 … in the month *mpʿ*
11 for my life and for the life of my seed day by day, and for the heir apparent,[114] and for his wife and for my people,[115]
12 [At the new mo]ons, and full moons, month by month for ever.

Avigad and Greenfield are of the opinion that the text from Larnaka-tis-Lapithou should be amended from *ḥdš zbḥ ššm* to *ḥdš zbḥ šmš* on the basis of comparative material.[116] Stieglitz concurs in this.[117] After examining the evidence for the association of Šamaš and the underworld throughout ancient Western Asia, which

[112] Stieglitz (2001) p. 214.

[113] Honeyman (1940) p. 57, also KAI 43.

[114] Krahmalkov (2000) p. 418.

[115] I note that Krahmalkov restores the text differently. I am following Honeyman's text here, and will not discuss the amendments because they make no difference for my purposes.

[116] Avigad and Greenfield (1982) p. 126.

[117] Stieglitz (2001) p. 214.

accumulates in an impressive way, Avigad and Greenfield concluded that the Phoenician *mrzḥ* passed into and was continued at Palmyra, in its θίασος for Šamaš.[118] At the end of the day, if the amendment be accepted (and we cannot in the state of our present knowledge make sense of the text without this) we are left with more evidence for a month of sacrifice(s) to Šamaš in Phoenician religion.

(11) COINS

The largest single corpus of learning on Phoenician coinage is still to be found in Hill.[119] Betlyon (1982) and the essays in Hackens and Moucharte (1992) are the best recent studies, and there is a concise introduction in Acquaro (1988). Snell observes that the Phoenician city states instituted their own coinages at a relatively late time. This is often attributed to the policy of their Persian overlords of the time, but as Snell notes, "it is possible that inertia and attachment to the old ways were more important".[120] When the Phoenicians did eventually start minting their own coins, they did not always dictate what would appear on the coins. However, my concern here is not numismatics *simpliciter*.

There are Phoenician coins which depict the sun, and some of these are mentioned in the literature, for example, the Malaga coins, and those from Lixus mentioning *mqm šmš* (the place of the sun).[121] Of these, the most interesting are those from Lixus in modern Morocco, to be dated between 50 BCE and 23 CE.[122] The legend on the coins is believed to refer to the idea that Lixus was at the end of land (the Atlas mountains are in Morocco), and hence where the sun sets. Thus, the Phoenician conception of the sun was, to their minds, confirmed in that beyond Lixus there was nothing to be seen but water.

From Byblos comes a coin, probably from about 420 BCE, with a winged seahorse on the obverse, and on the reverse a sun disc with "three bending rays, counter clockwise, in a dotted

[118] Avigad and Greenfield (1982) pp. 126-128.

[119] Hill (1910). This is an annotated catalogue of the British Museum's collection.

[120] Snell (1995) p. 1496.

[121] Bonnet (1989) p. 98 and Lipinski (1991) p. 62.

[122] *DCPP* p. 266.

square".[123] One cannot assert that this symbol must be associated with Šamaš as opposed to some other deity. Conversely, some coins with other symbols such as an eagle on a thunderbolt, may have solar overtones. These will be put aside, in the interests of caution. The number of coins depicting Astarte and Melqart far outnumber those with solar themes, but a sufficient number of solar motifs survive to support the importance of the sun in the Phoenician world.

One could not mention Phoenician numismatics without mentioning a specimen of the earliest Sidonian coinage from 450-435 BCE, depicting a ziggurat structure unique in Phoenicia. It was:

> … a stepped pyramid, resembling a Mesopotamian ziggurat. Fortunately Dunand's recent excavations have unearthed just such a structure. Dunand described it as a podium of ziggurat-like construction from Babylonian times (early to mid-sixth century BCE), which followed the plan of a typical Babylonian temple. It was clearly built by the Sidonians, however, and was subsequently altered by them in the Persian period. The method of construction is clearly Phoenician with parallels in Byblos and in the temple of Jerusalem. The Sidonian structure was the podium of the temple of Ešmun, … it may belong to either of the last two kings of the dynasty of Ešmun'azor—Bod-aštart or Yatonmilk.[124]

It may be that being vassals of the Babylonians, the Byblians built a ziggurat to ingratiate themselves. but the ziggurat also indicates the industry of the Phoenicians, and their receptivity. Perhaps the key point is that the ziggurat was dedicated to Ešmun. The foreign impact was absorbed, and integrated into the Phoenician world.

(12) THE SUN BARQUE

Before turning to the sun barque, it must be observed that the influence of Egypt upon Phoenicia was great and extensive, both over time and in its scope. Much of Phoenicia lay under Egyptian suzerainty for substantial periods. But politics and war were not the only sources of impact. Trade was a much longer term reality in the relations between them, especially trade between Byblos and Egypt.

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[123] Betlyon (1982) p. 127 n. 23.
[124] Betlyon (1982) pp. 3-4.

Given the prominent role that the sun, concepts of the afterlife, and abstract thought played in Egypt, a promising line of enquiry might be to make a study of the possible transmission between Egypt and Phoenicia. However, here I have made a decision to try and focus on the evidence from Phoenicia itself, using Egyptian analogs only where necessary to supplement the poor state of our evidence for Phoenicia (for example, in relation to the iconography of Ahiram's sarcophagus).

In Phoenicia, the sun is sometimes depicted as a barque.[125] As Bonnet notes, the popularity of the barque did not exclude the imagery of the betyl.[126] This imagery is chiefly, from what I can see, to be associated with the sun in conjunction with its movements through the diurnal cycle and then into the underworld. In this respect, the concept of the afterlife and the deities of dawn and dusk seem to be especially important. This is exemplified in the magnificent Phoenician silver cup of the seventh century BCE reproduced by Du Mesnil Du Buisson.[127] This is dealt with a little further below.

(13) ONOMASTIC EVIDENCE

Benz catalogues Phoenician and Punic names involving the element *šmš* from all over the Mediterranean: Egypt, Cyprus, Athens, Carthage, and Morocco.[128]

Assyrian texts of the seventh century BCE render the Phoenician name *ʿbdšmš* as *Ab-di-^{d}Sam-si* and *Ab-di-Sa-am-si*.[129] The evidence of the names is such that Lipinski forms the view that the cult of the sun must have been "bien établi" at Tyre and Sidon, although no inscriptions from the areas mention the cult.[130] Lipinski may well be correct, but the evidence is meager.

There is no doubt that Semitic names tend to have significance both for the family bestowing the names and for the persons named.[131] However, once one attempts to define that

[125] *DCPP* pp. 66-67.
[126] Bonnet (1989) p. 105.
[127] Du Mesnil Du Buisson (1973) p. 176, fig. 86.
[128] Benz (1972) pp. 422 and 423, under *šmš* and *šmšk*.
[129] Lipinski (1991) p. 61.
[130] Lipinski (1991) p. 62.
[131] Block (1988) p. 31.

significance, one finds the task elusive. For example, Block starts with the premise that the names of *ordinary* people (by which he means those who were not "royal and religious officials") may tell us something about popular devotion.[132] This is true: naming may be significant in that respect. This also rests upon the assumption that the ordinary people, when bestowing names, are not subject to any influence which would cause them to name their children in accord with anything other than their own personal devotion. I do not wish to evaluate that assumption, although we know too little about Phoenician names to be sure that the patterns of naming in Phoenicia—for ordinary people—were similar to those in other areas of the Ancient Near East.

However, if the practice of papponymy prevailed in Phoenicia, then immediately there is a convention which would constrain name giving. Equally, if names were chosen in order to flatter powerful persons with those same names, the validity of Block's argument is in doubt. Further, there are cultural variations which it is impossible to predict. For example, in some Christian cultures, reverence for the founder of Christianity is shown by *avoiding* the use of "Jesus" as a personal name, while in other Christian cultures this respect is shown in *employing* that name. Within the limits of personal devotion, certain names may be selected before others for subjective reasons which have nothing to do with religious reasons, for example, how much the namers liked the sound of a name.

In the event, Block was unable to make much of Phoenician personal names. He concludes that: "It is apparent from the personal names of ancient Phoenicians that no single deity commanded the devotion of all the people".[133] Basing himself upon Benz, Block found theophoric names which include reference to Baal, El, Ešmun, Melqart, and Milk. However, he went on to observe that in at least two situations, in Byblos and Tyre, we know that the name of the chief deity (Baʿalat Gubal and Melqart, respectively) was not as well represented as we would have expected. In fact, so far as we know, there are no instances of the Lady of Byblos being used in theophoric names.[134]

[132] Block (1988) p. 31.
[133] Block (1988) p. 139.
[134] Block (1988) pp. 39-40.

In trying to identify a one-to-one correlation between names and personal devotion, Block was obliged to turn to royal names. There he found it remarkable that in Sidon, king Ešmunazor and his son and successor Tabnit were priests of Astarte, although their names do not refer to her. Accordingly, he was correct to conclude that Phoenician personal names are not always very informative.[135] Yet there is some information to be gleaned from them.

Phoenician solar names are ubiquitous. In addition to the Assyrian example, an Egyptian statue of Horus erected at Memphis in the Phoenician language, mentions one *ʿbdšmš*, "servant of Šamaš".[136] *Kanaanäische und Aramäische Inschriften* dates it to the first century BCE, which, incidentally, supports the evidence for the vigor of the Phoenician language, as the names *ʾdnšmš* and *ʿbdšmš* are Phoenician. Otherwise, a consideration of Phoenician onomastics evidences substantial conservatism.[137] The name *ʾbnšmš* is significant, as we shall see when we come to the phoenix bird, below.[138]

The situation is slightly complicated because the Phoenicians bestowed hypocoristic names, and as the Phoenicians were polytheist, we are often unable to tell which deity is referred to. Some of the hypocoristic elements indicate the deity's gender.[139] Some examples are unclear. One example is the name of a Cypriote king, reigning in about 450 BCE with the name Sasmas.[140] Could this be a solar name, with metathesis of the middle consonants?

Benz cites a number of names with elements which he observes may come from either the word for peace or the name of the deity *Šlm*. I am unable to say that any of his examples must relate to the deity. The female name *yknšlm* is, one would think, more likely to relate to the word for "peace", meaning perhaps "may there be peace". One example of a *šlm* name has the Arabic

[135] Block (1988) pp. 40-41.

[136] KAI 48. The Phoenicians, the Tyrians especially, had comprised a significant presence at Memphis since Old Kingdom times: *DCPP* p. 287.

[137] KAI 48, and vol. 2, p. 65. *DCPP* puts it in the second century BCE: p. 287.

[138] Xella (1988) p. 383.

[139] Benz (1972) pp. 232-235.

[140] Baurain and Destrooper-Georgiades (1995) p. 626.

ending *lḥy*, perhaps meaning "my beseeching".[141] Benz also has examples of *Šḥr* names, *ʿštr* names,[142] and names with the elements *ʿz* and *ʿzz*. That these apply to my thesis is more controversial, because *ʿz* is not necessarily always an epithet of the planet Venus as either Morning and Evening Stars, or both.[143]

It may prove controversial, but one must ask whether the Phoenician names which included as an element the name of the deity *ṣdq* "Justice", were not also solar names. Lipinski is of the view that in Phoenicia, as in Mesopotamia and Israel, Šamaš probably had the role of presiding over justice. He observes that the use of the feminine gender for the word *šmš* in Malachi 3:20 would appear to bear this out. There, the prophet has Yahweh speaking about how, for those who have faith, there will arise: שֶׁמֶשׁ צְדָקָה וּמַרְפֵּא בִּכְנָפֶיהָ, "the sun of justice (with) healing in her wings".[144]

It is known that there was a Phoenician cult of Ṣdq, "Justice". It is consistently attested in onomastics from the eight to the fourth centuries BCE, from a Hellenistic dedication in Byblos to Δικαιοσύνη, and in Philo and Damaskios.[145] Although Justice was separately hypostasized, this would not preclude an identification at some level between Šamaš and Ṣdq. Now, if Malachi's sun with healing in her wings is the winged sun disk, she is unlikely to be an Egyptian or Mesopotamian deity, as that disk was masculine. It is possible that she was Phoenician, but she may have been Canaanite, or from some other culture—even perhaps indigenous to Israel. However, tantalizing as it is, the evidence does not take us so far. The connection between Šamaš and *ṣdq* in Phoenicia must remain possible but unproven.

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[141] Benz (1972) pp. 338 and 417-418. The translations of *lḥy* and *yknšlm* are my own.

[142] Benz (1972) pp. 385-386 and 414-415.

[143] Benz (1972) pp. 374-375.

[144] Lipinski (1995b) p. 268. It is significant that the sun of justice is not identified with Yahweh, even if she is related to him in some manner.

[145] Lipinski (1995b) pp. 112-113, where he also traces the evidence for the association of justice and royalty. I deal with Philo and Damaskios in the next chapter.

(14) THE SOLARIZATION OF OTHER CULTS

The issue here is the identification of Šamaš and Helios. There is abundant material on the solarization which took place in the Roman Empire, and I have cited some of these works where they are relevant to my thesis. However, ultimately, I have formed the view that they do not assist in understanding the nature of the Phoenician theology to which Julian alludes.

In this respect, the salient consideration is that the evidence of Damaskios allows us to trace ideas closely analogous to the Solar Pericope back to a time before this process began. Besides, as Lipinski correctly observes, the solar theology of the Roman Empire does not seem to be a survival from the ancient traditions of Rome. So far as we can tell, it is associated only in Egypt and Western Asia. When the sun cult gained ground in the Roman Empire, it seems to have been stimulated by the cult of Zeus at Baalbek. That deity is masculine, whereas Šamaš of Phoenicia is said by Lipinski to be female.[146] As religion became more syncretistic in the Roman Empire, even the storm god Hadad and Baal Šamim came to have solar attributes.[147]

However, I do not accept that the Phoenician Šamaš was always a goddess. A short digression is needed to establish this. I then return to the solarization of other cults. I observe that in his *magnum opus*, Lipinski asserts that the Phoenician deity Šamaš was masculine, and then—to support his case for discontinuity at Baalbek—states that the Baalbek solar deity was masculine while Phoenician Šamaš was probably originally female, like Ugaritic Šapšu.[148] I am of the view that while Šamaš undoubtedly could be female in Phoenicia, it is nevertheless true that Šamaš could *also* be male. The most direct evidence on the point is the depiction of the sun god in a Phoenician bowl from the Bernardini tomb, datable to the second half of the seventh century BCE, where the deity is female.[149] But on the other hand, there is also evidence in the

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[146] Lipinski (1991) pp. 63-64.

[147] Bonnet (1989) p. 103.

[148] Lipinski (1995b) pp. 265 and 268. I have commented on this in footnote 154. The best evidence available to us in set out in chapter 11, when I deal with Mochos.

[149] Hopkins (1965) pp. 28-30. The bowl was located in Praeneste, Italy.

Phoenician cosmogony preserved by Mochos, where Oulamos is male (and it appears that Oulamos is an epithet of Šamaš).[150] Given that Phoenicia was open to influence both from civilizations where there was a male deity named Šamaš (i.e., Mesopotamia), and from one which had a female deity named Šapšu (Ugarit), it is perhaps not surprising that there were diverse concepts of the sun's gender in Phoenicia.[151]

Another, although later, influence, which would tend to support a conception of the sun as masculine is the equation between Šamaš and Helios. Bonnet demonstrates that Šamaš came to be seen as identical to Helios, and this may have owed something to the ubiquity of the Phoenician sailors for whom Helios was guide and protector.[152] We cannot know whether the altars to Helios and other evidences of Greek and Roman religion in Phoenicia represent the faith of the Phoenicians, or foreign settlers and visitors, or perhaps a mixture of both.[153] However, the material needed to prove or disprove a relationship between these cults and the Phoenician veneration of Šamaš is missing.

The ancient Semitic world has a wealth of material on sun cults, and this is alluded to in the articles cited by Bonnet, Knoppers, and Lipinski. Bonnet writes: "… one can conclude that the Phoenician-Punic Šamaš is to be listed in the lineage of solar gods of the second millennium BCE, whose presence is implacable …".[154]

(15) AŠTART AND DEITIES ASSOCIATED WITH VENUS

The deity Aṯtar is known from the earliest Semitic pantheons. He is attested in Mari and Ebla, and retained such popularity in Southern Arabia, that he can properly be considered the chief deity there from the eighth century BCE until the sixth century CE.[155] Aṯtar, whose name is spelled differently depending upon the phonemes available in each Semitic language, was originally, it seems, the planet Venus as the Morning Star, which was considered to be

[150] This is dealt with in chapter 11.

[151] In Hebrew, *šmš* can be either masculine or feminine.

[152] Bonnet (1989) p. 103.

[153] Bonnet (1989) pp. 105-106.

[154] Bonnet (1989) p. 107.

[155] Mark S. Smith (1995) pp. 629-635.

male. His complementary deity, Aṯtart (who in non-Arabian Semitic was known as Aštart and Ištar) was Venus as the female Evening Star. The suggestion that he was androgynous is rejected by Mark S. Smith.[156] Aṯtar was known in Ugarit.[157]

There is reason to believe that he was known in Byblos in the Middle Bronze Age of 2000-1550 BCE and in the fourth century BCE. The evidence is slim,[158] but there is an MBA dagger scabbard from this period, when a prosperous Byblos traded with Egypt, Ugarit, Crete, Mari, and Ur.[159] The motifs are illuminated by the study of Du Mesnil Du Buisson. He presented two Assyrian seals of about the thirteenth century BCE which show an antelope (or gazelle, they are scientifically the same animal) which is about to be struck. In each case there is a tree and a star. In the first, it is a human and in the second a lion which masters the antelope. An Assyrian seal of the tenth century shows a figure, who Du Mesnil Du Buisson associates with the deity Ashtar, mastering an antelope. In a seal from Nuzi, a similar god is winged, and on the head of the lion which overpowers the antelope, rests a small circle or ball, which is plausibly interpreted as the morning star. Du Mesnil Du Buisson presents sound reasons to see these artifacts as depicting the morning star putting an end to the night.[160] In the seals the Aṯtar-figure and his lion act in concert.

I have been unable to find any evidence that the antelope (gazelle) was used as a symbol for night in ancient Western Asia. However, there is little evidence about the symbolic significance of the gazelle in ancient art. Animal encyclopaedias tend to say little about the gazelle of Western Asia except that, although it prospered to the nineteenth century, the spread of firearms has seen it almost eradicated from the area. However, *Macmillan's* had some information about African antelopes. While some of these are diurnal, some also appear chiefly at dawn and dusk, and others avoid the heat of day. This lends some support to Du Mesnil Du

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[156] Mark S. Smith (1995) p. 629 and n. 7.

[157] He is mentioned in a significant role in the Baal sequence.

[158] Mark S. Smith (1995) p. 634.

[159] Aubet (2001) pp. 21-22.

[160] Du Mesnil Du Buisson (1970) pp. 20-22. There are aspects of the theory I do not agree with. For example, I am not at all convinced that the tree represents the "freshness of night".

Buisson's identification. Now we come to the Byblian scabbard. Of this Du Mesnil Du Buisson writes:

> Le décor du fourreau d'un poignard d'or du temple d'Ashtar, dit Temple aux obélisques, à Byblos, fournit une version plus complexe en combinant deux faits successifs la mise à mort de l'antilope et celle du lion qui fait suite.[161]

Here, the lion prepares to eat the antelope and is itself about to be slain. This therefore unites the slaying of night by the morning star, with the fading of that "star" by day. A scene from a tub at Tell Mardikh shows twilight alone, in a fashion similar to that from the Byblos scabbard. There, an archer is about to slay the lion which attacks the bull of day. These are ritual slayings, if not only because in each case the blade or arrow head is impractically inserted into the lion's anus. Du Mesnil Du Buisson discusses additional details which establish this reading for the scabbard.[162] He also published a photograph of a fourteenth century BCE Tyrian bronze plaque now held by the Louvre. In the upper register, the first hours of the night are shown together with the last hours of night. The lion evening star eats the bull of the heat of the day with the aid of a cheetah. This takes the place of the god Aṯtar's dog, possibly because cheetahs could be used by humans in the hunt. Next to that, the cheetah strangles the antelope. In the next register, the lion is put to death by a griffin. Once again, as in the Nuzi seal, each lion is accompanied by a small circle—the star they represent. In the bottom is the "tree" in Phoenician form.[163]

Deities associated with the planet Venus were also known and venerated in Phoenicia under other names. The attested names *šlmbʿl* and *šḥrbʿl* mean "(the god) Dusk (is) (my?) Lord", and "(the god) Dawn (is) (my?) Lord", respectively.[164] As noted above, the *šlm* root could have to do with the concept of "peace" or "safety".

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[161] Du Mesnil Du Buisson (1970) p. 22 and figure 3.

[162] Du Mesnil Du Buisson (1970) pp. 22-23.

[163] Du Mesnil Du Buisson (1970) pp. 27-29. Hopkins (1965) also has astrological readings of the designs upon some Phoenician artifacts. They do not relate to the planet Venus.

[164] Segert (1994) pp. 202-203.

(16) THE PHOENIX BIRD

In Greek, the "Phoenix" bird is, as the name suggests, the "Phoenician" bird.[165] Van den Broek arrived at this conclusion after considering, but dismissing the other possibilities: that is, "the purple bird" and "the date palm bird".[166]

Although he did not consider all of the evidence relating the phoenix to Phoenicia, van den Broek concluded that the constant elements of the phoenix legend were:

> … (a) the bird has a long life and shortly before or directly after its death makes an appearance in the world of man; (b) by dying it obtains new life; and (c) it is pre-eminently the bird of the sun.[167]

While this conclusion is based upon the Egyptian, Greek, Roman, and then Christian traditions, it probably applied in Phoenicia, too. The evidence for this is to be found chiefly in some classical sources and in the Egyptian legends. First, however, there is one possible Phoenician reference, in the inscription of Yḥwmilk. The relevant portions of line 5 read:

> whʿpt ḥrṣ ʾš btkt ʾbn ʾš ʿl ptḥ ḥḥrṣ zn
>
> and the gold bird which is on the *tkt* stone which is by the gold inscription[168]

As we saw above, there is a view that the word ʿpt should be read as *ʿdt*, and that this was the Phoenician term for the winged disk.[169]

Krahmalkov renders this text as "the gold bird on the stone *tkt*".[170] Donner and Röllig read: "und die goldene Flügelsonne, die sich mitten auf dem Stein über dieser goldenen *Gravierung* hier befindet …".[171]

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[165] van den Broek (1972) p. 65.
[166] van den Broek (1972) pp. 51-65.
[167] van den Broek (1972) p. 10.
[168] KAI 10, line 5.
[169] *SSI* 3, p. 94 and note on p. 97; and Dalley (1986) p. 92.
[170] Krahmalkov (2000) p. 29.
[171] KAI vol. 2, p. 12.

If the correct reading is *ʿpt*, then it must be observed that the only attested meaning of the word in Phoenician is "bird".[172] Donner and Röllig argue on extraneous grounds that this must refer to the bird of the sun.[173] I think that they are correct in that if there is a bird here, then it is the bird of the sun. However, they only consider Egyptian analogs for the "bird of the sun", and neither investigate whether a Phoenician exemplar may be available, nor do they refer to the bird on the plaque which is often referred to as that of of Yḥwmilk (see below). Krahmalkov suggests that the *tkt* may be a column.[174] Donner and Röllig are of the opinion that it is equivalent to the Hebrew *btwk*, "in the midst of".[175] However, this is simply asserted, and it is difficult to see how a golden bird—of any description—could be in the midst of a stone.

It is significant that this inscription is dedicated to Baʿalat Gubal, the Lady of Byblos, for the so-called Yḥwmilk plaque, showing him before the Lady, clearly depicts a bird upon one of her wrists (Figure 4).[176] Her temple at Byblos also contained a betyl,[177] and this is illustrated on a coin from the reign of the Roman Emperor Macrinus, showing the betyl inside the Lady's temple (Figure 5).[178] Figure 5 includes a reconstruction of the temple of Baʿalat Gubal, showing how the archaeologists believed the betyl related to the temple structure.[179] Note that the betyl is open to the sky, and very prominent. Although Saghieh challenges Dussaud's chronology of the temple plan, she accepts that the betyl was placed in an open area:

> No stone bases were found in the northern part (of the floor of building XV of temple XIII), an indication that this area of blg XV was left open to the sky as its width is too great to be

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[172] Krahmalkov (2000) p. 384 and Tomback (1978) pp. 274-275, *sub* ʿpt II.

[173] KAI vol. 2, p. 14.

[174] Krahmalkov (2000) p. 491.

[175] KAI vol. 2, p. 14.

[176] Markoe (2000) p. 128, figure 43. The representation upon the plaque is very similar to that on the Yḥwmlk stele, which is shown at Gubel (2002) pp. 65-66.

[177] Markoe (2000) p. 122.

[178] Markoe (2000) p. 99 figure 29k.

[179] Figure 5 is from Dussaud (1927) p. 116.

> spanned by wooden beams without the help of vertical posts to support the weight of the roof. Such an arrangement is very likely because the circular structure with its votive obelisk was built in this part; and in view of the probability that the obelisk served as a place for burning sacrifices, it was important that they should have an open area so that smoke could escape freely.[180]

The classical evidence is located in Ovid and Martial. Ovid states that the Assyrians call the bird the phoenix, while Martial states that the bird fires and restores the "Assyrian nests" when it has lived ten centuries.[181] Both refer to "Assyrians", but as van den Broek points out, this often meant "Phoenician". If van den Broek is correct to see these as references to Phoenicians, then this is direct evidence that the Phoenicians saw the phoenix as part of a cluster of legends to do with the sun and rebirth after death.

The best known classical reference to the phoenix does not mention Phoenicia. This is Herodotos' report of how the phoenix, *inter alia*, embalms its deceased parent in a ball of myrrh and flies this parcel to the temple of the sun, which temple, the story implies, is at Egyptian Heliopolis (ancient Iunu).[182] This detail is of potential significance: the unidentified king of Byblos whose inscription is known from Röllig's publication as "Byblos 13", states that he lies in his coffin: *ʾsp bmr wbdl[ḥ* …, "gathered in myrhh and bdellium".[183]

The relationship between the Egyptian *benu* bird and the phoenix, has been commented upon before.[184] However, using Xella's insight that the Phoenician term *ʾbn* could refer to the betyl,[185] we now have a fresh perspective on that relationship and

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[180] Saghieh (1983) p. 16. Saghieh's plan of the temple at this stage is at pl. IV. I have preferred to reproduce Dussaud's sketch, as being a restoration.

[181] van den Broek (1972) pp. 51-52 citing Ovid *Metamorphoses* 15.393 and Martial *Epigrams* 5.71-2. I have checked the references, and they are accurate. Ovid writes of the phoenix in terms which support van den Broek's abstract of the "constant elements" of the legend which I quoted at the opening of this section.

[182] Herodotos 2.73.

[183] Röllig (1974) p.2. Bdellium is a myrrh-like resin.

[184] Grottanelli (1972) p. 55.

[185] Xella (1988) *passim*. This view is accepted by Lipinski in *DCPP* p. 70.

on the significance of the betyl in Phoenicia. For example, Xella notes that scholars have attempted to amend the attested Phoenician name *ʾbnšmš*, for something less unexpected. Xella rejects these attempts, arguing that the *ʾbn* in question might be the betyl—a symbol of the sun.[186]

To turn now to the betyl and the phoenix in Egypt, it is known that the *benu* bird was associated with the *benben* stone, and both names are thought to come from an Egyptian word.[187] An utterance from the Pyramid texts of the Old Kingdom refers to how Atum Kheprer arose on the *benben* stone.[188] Of the *benben* stone, Lesko writes:

> (It was a) representation at Heliopolis of the primeval hillock of creation. There is obvious wordplay here involving *wbn* ("to arise"), but the interdependence of the two words is not necessarily required.[189]

Most scholars believe the words *benu* and *benben* to be connected to *wbn*. Thus Quirke writes:

> The ground itself was conceived as a lump of rock named the *benben*-stone, a word connected to *weben*, 'to shine', and used as the image of the pyramid, its capstone the pyramidion and the pyramidal top of the obelisk; the sanctuary at Iunu[190] housed the stone in a shrine called the 'house of the *benben*'. The sun-god emerged either from an egg, a transparent and evocative metaphor for new life, or as the bird named *benu*, also from the kernel of words around *weben* and resembling a heron; the *benu*-heron appears to be part of the inspiration for the classical tale of the phoenix …[191]

The *benu*, being the *ba* of the sun god, could be used in the Late Period as a hieroglyph for that god. But it could also, in astrological texts, stand for the planet Venus.[192] I would suggest that it is possible that the words *benu* and *benben* are derived from the Semitic *ʾbn*. First, the association in meaning between *wbn* "to

[186] Xella (1988) pp. 387-388.
[187] van den Broek (1972) pp. 14-16.
[188] Lesko (1991) p. 92.
[189] Lesko (1991) p. 92 n. 4.
[190] Iunu is the Egyptian name for "Heliopolis".
[191] Quirke (1992) p. 27.
[192] Wilkinson (1992) p. 91.

rise" or "to shine" rests upon a rather indirect metaphorical link: that because Atum *arose* onto the hillock, or because the sun *rises* and *shines*, the stone and the bird associated with these acts are named after the relevant verb. But the bird neither rises nor shines, and so I am inclined to agree with Lesko that we have here a case of *wordplay*, and not necessarily derivation.

Second, scholars have not, to the best of my knowledge, attempted to explain the reduplication in the word *benben*. Because the Phoenician word *ʾbn* can mean the betyl stone, then if it also served as the name of the bird, the Egyptian word *benben* may originally have meant "the betyl of the *benu* bird".[193] That is, it was not just any obelisk, but the one associated with the phoenix. This theory is plausible, I would suggest, as both the *benben* and the betyl were solar symbols from cultures which experienced a good deal of mutual influence from ancient times.

After a study of certain Phoenician legends as transmitted in Philo of Byblos and Nonnos, and some comparison with the myth of the phoenix bird, Grottanelli concludes:

> Oltre al parallelismo Eracle-aquila con il tramite della Fenice, si osserverà dunque nel mito riportato da Nonnos una corrispondenza fra la situazione osservata sull'ulivo infuocato e quella che sottende tutto il mito: la coesistenza di due elementi solitamente contrapposti: il celeste/solare e lo cthonio.[194]

I am not concerned to deal with the foundation myths which Grottanelli studied. But his conclusion that the Nonnos myth of the foundation of Tyre may in fact be drawing upon legends associated with the phoenix bird, must be noted. The bird in question was an eagle, and it was perched atop of a flaming olive tree.[195] The flaming olive may perhaps be an equivalent of the betyl, for numismatic depictions of the black stone of Elagabalos show it in company of an eagle with outstretched wings.[196] The eagle in Nonnos is sacrificed but there is no mention of rebirth. Thus while it may belong to a body of legend associated with the

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[193] I am not concerned about the loss of the initial aleph. The prothetic aleph can appear and disappear: consider the Arabic *ʾbn* for "son" as opposed to Hebrew and Phoenician *bn*.

[194] Grottanelli (1972) p. 58.

[195] Nonnos 40.469-534.

[196] Frey (1989) p. 45.

phoenix bird, it is not independent evidence of the phoenix legend in Phoenicia.

There is one other curious piece of evidence which must be mentioned before we leave the phoenix bird: the story of Isis at Byblos. According to Plutarch in Περὶ Ἴσιδος καὶ Ὀσίριδος, probably written just before 120 CE,[197] Isis came to Byblos in search of Osiris' corpse in its coffin. The coffin had come ashore at Byblos, in the branches of a tree, which had grown up and enclosed it. The king of Byblos had the tree made into a pillar in his house. Isis was taken into the service of the queen. The queen's name, Plutarch reports, was variously given as Astarte, Saosis, or Nemanous. The king was named Malkandros (or perhaps, Malkathros).[198] As nurse of the royal child, one night Isis commenced to burn away the "mortal parts of its body" in a fire: τὰ θνητὰ τοῦ σώματος.[199] While this was happening, Isis transformed herself into a swallow, and flew around the pillar, lamenting her dead husband. The queen came upon this scene, and not understanding, drew her child from the fire, and "so deprived it of immortality".[200]

The story has an intrinsic connection with Phoenicia: this is shown first by its setting in Byblos, the source of our best evidence for the betyl, and the location of the Yḥwmilk inscription and plaque. But the names of the king and queen are also significant. I see no reason to reject the manuscript reading "Malkandros". Olyan argues that this name must be reconstructed as **milk ʾaddīr*, and states that "confusion between West Semitic *ʾaddīr* and Greek *andros* needs little explanation".[201] This seems to me unnecessary. The element *mlk* is clearly Semitic, but there is no reason to see the king as a deity. The child's parents are not divine: were they so, the ceremony would be superfluous. Queen Astarte, the child's mother, is not meant to be understood as divine. This must, I think, follow from Plutarch's addition that her name is the

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[197] Griffiths (1970) p. 17.

[198] Plutarch, *Concerning Isis and Osiris* 15 and 16. All manuscripts write "Malkandros" in place of "Malkathros", but Griffiths accepts this emendation.

[199] Plutarch, *Concerning Isis and Osiris* 16.

[200] Plutarch, *Concerning Isis and Osiris* 16.

[201] Olyan (1988) p. 67.

equivalent of Athenais.[202] As Griffiths notes, the "form Athenais does not seem to have been used elsewhere of the goddess (sc. Athena), being used rather of an Attic phyle or as the name of a woman".[203] Thus the ruler's name is probably a mix of Phoenician and Greek: "king man". However, as noted, Griffiths believes that the name should be amended to "Melkathros", and he sees this name as being metathetic for "Melkarthos", the Phoenician Melqart.[204]

To return to the myth, the pillar may represent the betyl, and the bird the phoenix. Coins from Arqa show Astarte mourning, with a bird upon a sceptre (in Hill's interpretation),[205] or a column (according to Griffiths).[206] Hill cites a passage from Macrobius associating just this weeping deity with Mount Lebanon.[207] These two coins are attached as Figure 6.[208] There is then, evidence independent of Plutarch for a Phoenician legend of a weeping goddess associated with a bird on a column or sceptre. Taking all of these considerations together, the only conclusion can be that Plutarch has preserved a Phoenician legend which was associated by the Egyptians with their own goddess, Isis. The commercial and religious connections between Byblos and Egypt were already well-known to have been both ancient and strong.[209]

Plutarch's is a composite legend: the three different names of the queen show that. One must, therefore, be careful in making use of it. However, it is significant that a connection between the symbol of the bird and the concept of immortality is apparent in

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[202] Plutarch, *Concerning Isis and Osiris* 15.

[203] Griffiths (1970) p. 327. Interestingly, Griffiths does not appreciate the significance of this. He is puzzled by this fact, for he proceeds on the implicit assumption that Astarte must be here a deity. Perhaps for this reason he favors the amendment of her husband's name to a form of "Melqart".

[204] Griffiths (1970) p. 325.

[205] Hill (1910) pp. lxxi-lxxii and Pl. XIII 7 and 8. He does not date the coins, but states that they cannot be before about 149 CE.

[206] Griffiths (1970) p. 329 and n. 2.

[207] Hill (1910) p. lxxii.

[208] Figure 6 is taken from Hill (1910) Pl. XIII.

[209] Markoe (2000) pp. 26-28 and 117; Saghieh (1983) pp. 104-105, 121 (noting the "Egyptianised character" of the Baʿalat Gubal complex) and 130-131.

the interrupted magic ritual. What, then, is the significance of the ritual, and what does it tell us about the phoenix bird in Phoenicia?

As both Weinfeld[210] and Olyan,[211] after him, have observed, this text may shed light on the phenomena taken to be child sacrifice in ancient Phoenicia, and perhaps illuminate a thorny question in Israelite history. Weinfeld's article considers the evidence from Phoenicia, Israel, and the classical world which is said to evidence child sacrifice in Phoenicia and Israel. However, he also considers certain texts from Assyria and pre-Islamic Arabia which place the terms used in the Hebrew Bible in their context. He demonstrates that when the Hebrew Bible speaks of "burning" children, or "making them pass through the fire", this is in fact a reference to a dedication ceremony where incense was burned.[212] Olyan is dismissive, saying simply that: "Weinfeld … argues that children were never really burned. His arguments are most unconvincing".[213]

I, on the contrary, find Weinfeld's arguments persuasive. Olyan does not descend to detail, so it might be taken that he means the entire drift of his book to be his reply to Weinfeld. But one could take just two matters raised by Weinfeld. First, as he points out, the legal texts of the Hebrew Bible, using more precise language than the prophets, never speak of burning a child but rather making the child pass through the fire, and so on. As Weinfeld observes:

> The verbs "to give, to make to pass" do not in themselves suggest burning or killing but rather transference to another authority. In the subject under discussion they are close in meaning to dedication.[214]

The proper method, Weinfeld argues, is to distinguish the careful legal texts from "moralizing literature whose tendentiousness and poetical fantasy tend to blur the authentic

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[210] Weinfeld (1972) pp. 137-138.

[211] Olyan (1988) pp. 67-68.

[212] Weinfeld (1972) pp. 140-154.

[213] Olyan (1988) p. 12 n. 33.

[214] Weinfeld (1972) p. 141. I am only summarising Weinfeld's arguments and conclusions. His section on the Hebrew Bible is found at pp. 140-144.

picture of the reality to which it refers".[215] The second of Weinfeld's arguments I wish to refer to is drawn from the Mesopotamian material. He presents excerpts from some Neo-Assyrian texts. The first of these speaks of burning the eldest son in the ḫamru of the god Adad.[216] This looks quite unequivocal. But the next text states that a daughter and son are to be burnt to two deities, *together with* a quantity of cedar resin. The third is similar except that they are to be burned with spice. Other texts refer to the dedication of children and other persons to a god or gods.[217] Further, the context of this material is not suggestive of the death of the children.[218]

I would suggest then, that we have some evidence for a Phoenician custom of passing a child through fire, with a view to dedicating the child to a god or goddess. This ritual was integrated into other Phoenician ideas to do with life, death, and rebirth. These concepts were associated chiefly with the sun, and with two symbols of the sun, the betyl and the bird of the betyl, the phoenix.

However, the significance of the phoenix was not confined to this context alone. Rather,the phoenix and the betyl were a part of the cult of Baʿalat Gubal, the Lady of Byblos, and were attested in connection with her and a weeping goddess Astarte for over a thousand years. Indeed, if the Egyptian connection is as close as I have contended, the link between these concepts endured for more than three thousand years.

The phoenix is thus further evidence for a Phoenician association of the sun with life, the passing away of life, and the survival or rebirth of the deceased.

(17) THE ASTROLOGICAL BOWL

The outer band of an engraved Phoenician bowl found in the Bernardini tomb in Praeneste, Italy, depicts some episodes involving a royal figure. While these episodes are often interpreted only as depicting an eventful hunt, Hopkins has convincingly argued that they in fact allegorically depict an eclipse and then the

[215] Weinfeld (1972) p. 141.
[216] Weinfeld (1972) p. 144.
[217] Weinfeld (1972) pp. 144-145.
[218] Weinfeld (1972) p. 145.

reappearance of the sun.[219] In one of the nine episodes the king is set upon by a hairy monster, but is rescued by the sun goddess. As Hopkins notes, a prosaic interpretation of the bowl is rendered problematic by the incongruous feature of the vast size of the ape-like creature.[220] Hopkins mentions other Phoenician bowls which lend some support for his reading.[221] The Bernardini bowl therefore shows a Phoenician interest in the sun and its celestial life, so to speak. I observe that while Markoe's monograph on Phoenician bronze and silver bowls mentions this artifact, he does not consider, or even refer to Hopkins' article and interpretation.[222] He does, however, say:

> … the specificity of the theme, the cohesiveness of the story line, and the element of divine intervention, coupled with the fact that the identical sequence is preserved in two distinct copies, argue strongly for the supposition that the story itself is not merely the product of a Phoenician artist's vivid imagination but does, in fact, describe a lost fable or epic.[223]

I shall not study the bowl in any great detail here, but I suggest that upon the basis of Hopkins' research, it can be read as evidencing a spirituality relating to the dependence of humanity on the gods.

It is appropriate, here, to say something about the relationship between the sun and eternity in Mesopotamia and Egypt. This will not prove the case for the seven propositions above, but it will show that they are not anomalous in terms of the Ancient Near East, and hence make it more plausible to accept that they may have existed in Phoenicia.

THE SUN IN MESOPOTAMIA AND EGYPT

The evidence for Šamaš in Mesopotamia is abundant, but has not been gathered in one comprehensive study. The deity was

[219] Hopkins (1965) *passim*.
[220] Hopkins (1965) p. 30.
[221] Hopkins (1965) pp. 31-34.
[222] Markoe (1985) pp. 67-68 and 195.
[223] Markoe (1985) p. 68.

masculine, and was associated with justice.[224] He was the chief deity of the ancient Sumerian town of Sippar, and played a leading role in the Standard Babylonian Gilgameš epic. The 200-line hymn to Šamaš was apparently a favorite in the Neo-Assyrian period; although it is impossible to say when it was first written, or to retrace its editorial history, Lambert is of the view that the Kassite period was too early for the hymn as we have it.[225] Its form is the "bookend" structure: there are two parts to the hymn, each of which treats much the same topic, but in reverse order, thus imitating "the course of the sun in its march from East to West, and its return from West to East through the Netherworld".[226]

The very first word of the hymn is instructive: *muš-na-m[ir]*—"illuminator". This word is forcefully repeated at the commencement of lines 3 and 17. Significantly, Šamaš has a role in the underworld; in line 33 he is referred to as *re-ʾ-u šap-la-a-ti*, "shepherd of the below", and is said to shine in, and even to go down into the apsû.[227] The singer also addresses him, saying:

> 31 šap-la-a-ti m[a-a]l-ki ^{d}kù-su$_{x}$ (BU) ^{d}a-nun-na-ki ta-paq-qid
>
> Below (sc. in the netherworld) the co[unsel]lors of Kusu and the Annunnaki you care for.[228]

Kusu is an *asakku* demon, described once as mār Ani ("son of Anu").[229] There exist lists which place Kusu in the company of Asakku, and in tablet XII of the Standard Babylonian Gilgameš epic there appears a phrase: "death [lit. ^{d}Namtar] did not seize him, the assakku demon did not seize him, the underworld [erṣeti] seized him". This treats the asakku as being as horrible as, but not

[224] Frankfort (1948) p. 308 quite rightly remarks: "… the sun quite universally appears to be symbolical of order and hence also of the order of justice …"

[225] Lambert (1960) pp. 121-123. Parts of the text have been located at Sippar, and may have been recited in the temple there: Leick (2001) p. 190. I tend to think that the hymn as a whole is earlier than Lambert believes: see briefly Castellino (1976) p. 74.

[226] Castellino (1976) p. 72.

[227] *Hymn to Šamaš* lines 37-38 and 57.

[228] Line 31, see also line 186 for Šamaš as counsellor.

[229] Tallqvist (1974) p. 343. The *asakku* are the children of Anu in *CAD*, "A", p. 326, column 1, a).

identical with, the underworld.[230] Again, while Šamaš may have a role related to the underworld, and indeed functions as a connection between the upper world and the lower, he is not a fearsome death deity.

To return to the hymn, Šamaš is in the cedar wood bowl of the diviner, and teaches the dream priests interpretation.[231] Lines 55 to 64, and (it would appear) from 83 to 146 deal with Šamaš as judge and dispenser of justice and equity, both in the courtroom and outside, in life. His ability to discern the truth is stressed throughout, as is his ability to "make plain" what is "perplexing".[232] In particular, it is said that "you listen to (hear) all": *tal-te-me ka-la-ma*.[233] After citing portions of the hymn, Leick states:

> This composition (the 200 line hymn) reveals that Shamash, more than any other Mesopotamian god, stood for the values of social justice, the protection of the weak and principles of fairness in business. … The hymn of Shamash … (reminds) us that the rituals in temples also served to inculcate moral values and ethical standards.[234]

I think that this is correct, although it rests upon her view that the hymn was probably recited in the temple. A full exploration of this issue is not warranted here, but the view is a respectable one, and shows that it may take a little research in order to see the religion of the ancient world as more than a one dimensional system of ritual.[235]

This invites comparison with certain Sumerian incantations to Utu, which were apparently copied and studied in Sumerian, in

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[230] *CAD*, "A", p. 326, column 1, a) and b).

[231] *Hymn to Šamaš* lines 53-54. See also line 151.

[232] See for example, *Hymn to Šamaš* lines 126-129.

[233] *Hymn to Šamaš* line 146.

[234] Leick (2001) pp. 192-193.

[235] No mention of this hymn would be complete without referring to the mystical significance of 200 lines in this text. After noting that 20 was the number of Šamaš, Castellino (1976) p. 74 states: "… in developing the praises of Šamaš, in structuring the sections, in wording their contents, and finally, in establishing the extent of the hymn and the number of the verses, the poet has acted with the planned purpose of an accomplished artist".

Neo-Babylonian times.[236] One text opens by referring to the way Utu shines on the horizon, appears in the land, and the god is then hailed as the one who "created the wild animals and living creatures of the steppe"; he instructs the world, and is the god of justice.[237] However, he is also referred to as being "from the [Netherworld]" and in the very next line as the advisor who has given "one advice" (i.e., gives a single sincere piece of advice).[238] This is reminiscent of how in the Šamaš hymn, the sun god cares for the counsellors of the underworld gods. The reverse of the tablet opens similarly.

There is some controversy on certain points to do with another of these incantations. However, they all have in common that Utu is associated with justice.[239] Of special interest is "Incantation to Utu C", where the hymn asserts that without Utu "the (divine) plan of [kingship is not sustained]".[240] The Sumerian words here are giš-ḫur, which were taken directly into Akkadian as gišḫurru, the cosmic blueprint. The sun god is thus associated not only with the creation of the world, but also with planning and ordering of kingship, a social institution which was central to the Sumerian notions of world order.[241] Without Utu, no decision is made, and in particular, no judge decides anything.[242]

To analyze this, although Utu is not said to be intelligence, he nonetheless represents it: he is just, he makes decisions, in fact, he seems to be responsible for decision making *per se* in incantation C. Tallqvist provides a great number of epithets belonging to Šamaš in his aspect as "unbestechlicher Entscheider".[243] Further, he is responsible for the plan of kingship: he provides, as it were, the template, the fundamental concept.

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[236] Geller (1995) p. 101 and n. 2. Geller states that there is no evidence one of these was ever "formally translated" into Akkadian. Doubtless there were oral translations made into Akkadian and even into Aramaic. Another tablet contains two incantations which were translated into Akkadian: p. 102.

[237] Lines 1-19, Geller (1995) p. 188.

[238] Lines 21 and 22, Geller (1995) p. 188.

[239] Geller (1995) pp. 103 and 108.

[240] Geller (1995) pp. 109 and 111, line 7'.

[241] Frankfort (1948) pp. 237-238.

[242] Geller (1995) pp. 109 and 111, line 12'.

[243] Tallqvist (1974) pp. 457-458. The epithets of Šamaš, generally, are found at pp. 455-460.

But perhaps the most important of all the parallels between Mesopotamia and Phoenicia is to be found in the Standard Babylonian Gilgameš Epic. It seems to me that when he decides to seek Ut-napištim, and find immortality, it is implicit that Gilgameš must travel to a place which is not beneath the sun. In tablet IX, Gilgameš proceeds to Mount Mašu, and has to pass beneath the mountain, guarded by the scorpion men. The point is that it is from Mount Mašu that the sun arises each day. Gilgameš, by travelling beneath the mountain, is in effect, passing outside of the bounds of the earth whereon the sun shines. After passing through the mountain tunnel:

it]-ta-ṣi la-am ^{d}UTU-ši

He came out before Šamaš[244]

That is, he is no longer "under the sun", to use the Phoenician phrase. The immortal Ut-napištim and his wife dwell in this land beyond the waters of death. They do not dwell *under* the sun but *before* it.[245] The Yale tablet of the Old Babylonian version states that:

i-lu-ma it-ti ^{ilu}Šamaš da-ri-iš u[š-šab]

The gods dwell with Šamaš forever.[246]

Why would Šamaš of all the deities be named here? It seems to me that the evidence for Šamaš as the deity who measures both eternity and also ephemerality is quite strong.[247]

The situation in Egypt is much more complex both in that there is far more material on the sun, and that material is more complex. The sun was central to Egyptian religion throughout its history, and most of the major gods had solar aspects.[248] Here, I can only make a few observations, and deal with the material ahistorically, but there were in fact developments in the sun's place in Egyptian religion and in the details of many aspects of the

[244] Gilgameš IX line 172 in the edition of Parpola (1997).

[245] For a general discussion of the treatment of this part of the universe in the Gilgameš epic, see Horowitz (1998) pp. 96-106.

[246] Thompson (1930) p. 27 column IV, line 7.

[247] Incidentally, Seow (1997) p. 105, reads Ps 72:5 as praying "may he live long with the sun". However, this is not the common reading.

[248] Wilkinson (1992) p. 129.

cult.[249] However, once the Egyptian religion had developed into the form it took for the bulk of its history, the movement of the sun god across the sky was its focus: "The journey of the sun through the day sky to rest in the evening and through the night sky to be born in the morning gave the universe the character of perpetual motion, as distinct from the static view of the world common to classical Greek, Roman, and Judaeo-Christian concepts of the cosmos".[250] It is a well-known feature of the royal theology that at death the king joined the sun god Raʿ in his daily circuit.[251]

The fullest treatment known to me of the solar theology of Egypt, as it came to be in its prime in the New Kingdom, is that of Assmann. Interestingly, Assmann sees many of the texts he edited and comments upon as being "the textual expression of a spiritual-religious movement. … The spiritual movement that is embedded in and expressed by them might be described as the struggle to articulate a concept of the unity of the divine, i.e., the One God".[252] This is something very different from pantheism: in Egyptian theology the resemblance is "coincidental and superficial".[253]

Yet the Egyptian conception was symbolic, and even more than that, mystical in that the king participated in the solar rites (by his delegated priests) to somehow include humanity in the celestial event of the journey of the sun barque.[254] Egyptian religion contained diverse elements: for example, the sun god was also at the center of the Egyptian conceptions of justice, together with his daughter, Maat, who is "truth, established order, right order".[255]

Phoenician notions associating the sun with two types of time find certain echoes in Egypt. In the New Kingdom, the sun god was described as a child who "becomes young again at his time, suckled by Nut 'at both times'". A hymn declares:

> Greetings boy from the womb
> Child, who ascends in the lotus flower

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[249] Quirke (1992) pp. 21-51 provides a readable introduction to the historical development of the solar aspects of Egyptian religion.

[250] Quirke (1992) p. 35.

[251] Quirke (1992) p. 164.

[252] Assmann (1995) p. 2.

[253] Hornung (1982) pp. 127-128.

[254] Assmann (1995) p. 36.

[255] Frankfort (1948) p. 157.

> Beautiful youth, who comes from the land of light
> And illuminates the [Two Lands] with his light.[256]

As in the Solar Pericope, light is a holy radiation of the sun which floods the earth with the god's presence.[257] There are different types of time in Egypt, but whether or not the Egyptians had a clear conception of the difference between them, I doubt that the difference was an analytic one. Assmann writes that there was a Shu theology in the Middle Kingdom according to which Atum created the world and life, but wherein life-giving was delegated to Shu and Tefnut. Shu was known as ʿnḫ (life) and as nḥḥ (endless time), while Tefnut was mꜣʿt (Maat, i.e., truth/justice/order) and ḏt (invariable permanence).[258] Assmann provides the following exegesis:

> The motif of the maternal rebirth or rejuvenation of the sun-god as a child symbolises time in its cyclical or reversible aspect, which the Egyptians called Neḥeḥ as opposed to time as duration and quasi-spatial expansion, which they called Djet.[259]

But this is not all. In respect of my sixth principle, that the sun is a linguistic symbol of both passing time and eternity, there is a related Egyptian notion. Assmann quotes an Egyptian text in these terms:

> You unite with *neḥeḥ*-time
> when it rises as the morning sun,
> and with *djet*-time
> when it sets as the evening sun.[260]

Here the sun seems to be a measuring rod of two types of time. The Egyptian material is suggestive of the Phoenician, but it is equally clearly not identical. Cooper argues that the Phoenician title *šmš ʿlm* must have been "a product of the influence of the Amarna theology".[261] It may have been so, but not necessarily for Cooper's reasons. To establish that thesis one would have to show

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[256] Assmann (1995) p. 45 and p. 45 n. 40.
[257] Assmann (1995) p. 73.
[258] Assmann (1995) p. 80.
[259] Assmann (1995) pp. 45-46.
[260] Assmann (2001) p. 75.
[261] Cooper (1987) p. 3.

that the influence could not have come earlier, or even have gone in the other direction, and Cooper does neither. However, Cooper has a much better argument when he comes to the identity of the deity in question. On the basis of Egyptian material, he contends that, in Egypt, this must have been Osiris. He also demonstrates that Osiris' equivalent in Phoenicia was Rešeph. Cooper also refers to Ugaritic evidence which shows that Rešeph was somehow associated with Šapšu when she descended into the netherworld at the close of day.[262] Cooper goes on to cite texts from the Nineteenth Dynasty of Egypt which refer to Rešeph as the Lord and the God of Eternity.[263] These considerations confirm the association between the term *ʿlm* and the netherworld. Cooper concludes:

> The rich nuances of the term *ʿlm* in the epithet *mlk ʿlm* ought, perhaps, to be borne in mind in connection with first-millennium usage of the term. It may be possible to speak of an Egypto-Canaanite conception of "eternity" that is *both* temporal and spatial: and the point of contact between those two aspects of *ʿlm* is the eternal realm of death. The substantive *ʿlm* never entirely loses its connection with death and the netherworld; it clearly survives, for example, in the idiom *bēt ʿôlām*, and perhaps in other first-millennium expressions as well …[264]

In a subsequent article, which was nonetheless published earlier, Cooper pursued this theme and demonstrated that there are reasonable grounds to see in the Hebrew phrase *pitḥê ʿôlām* a reference to the gates of the netherworld, and in Psalm 24:7-10 a fragment of a myth in which a high god descends to the netherworld and confronts its lords. Once again, Cooper found interesting and persuasive Egyptian analogs.[265]

As in the case of Iamblichos, the material is obscure and difficult, but nonetheless suggestive. A full study of these layered concepts of time would be an attractive proposition at some point.

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[262] Cooper (1987) pp. 2-5. Cooper cites Fulco (1976) p. 40, for corroboration of this point. Fulco's research does support this argument.

[263] Cooper (1987) p. 6.

[264] Cooper (1987) p. 7.

[265] Cooper (1983) pp. 42-54. Cooper emphasized that he did not find evidence of a consistent and unanimous Israelite position on the relationship between Yahweh and death.

It is, however, sufficient for my purpose to observe that the Mesopotamian and Egyptian ideas of the sun provide counterparts, in some ways, to the Phoenician theology in Julian and as abstracted from the inscriptions. It aids my thesis that material of comparable sophistication and of undoubted antiquity exists. Indeed, some of these texts are at least 1,000 years older than the development of Mycenaean, let alone classical Greek, civilization.

It is time now to turn to some works which explicitly deal with Phoenician religion: Philo of Byblos and the fragments of cosmogonies preserved in Damaskios.

CHAPTER 10
MOCHOS, EUDEMOS, AND PHILO OF BYBLOS

There is evidence that the chief concept of the Solar Pericope, that the sun represents "mind", can be found in Phoenicia many years before Julian. This evidence is found in Mochos' statement that Oulomos was the first deity that intellect can perceive, and that he was (probably) "unmixed mind". The statement is significant because it is contended that "Oulomos" is the sun, or at least one aspect of the sun, and because Mochos is known to have lived before or contemporaneously with Demokritos of Abdera who must have been born by 460 BCE.[1] *The Phoenician History* of Philo of Byblos and the short fragment of Mochos preserved by Damaskios, are important sources for the religion of Phoenicia.

MOCHOS AND EUDEMOS

I commence with the fragmentary cosmogonies preserved in Damaskios' Περὶ ἀρχῶν (*De principiis* or *Concerning Causes* as it is usually known), as these are in fact older than Philo. Damaskios is one of the late antique philosophers, like Iamblichos, whose reputation had been rather poor in modern scholarship, but is now being rehabilitated. This revaluation is due to a change in the way scholars see philosophy and science in relation to religion. Today, philosophy and science are less likely to be considered as an area to be decontaminated of religious and spiritual concerns. For example, Kingsley writes of his researches into Orphism:

> During the wave of scepticism earlier in the century (i.e., the 20th century) about all matters 'Orphic', Damascius and Olympiodorus suffered particularly badly: it was argued that, apart from living nearly a thousand years after Plato, they were gullible mystics and the value of their reports in helping to reconstruct early Orphic literature almost nil. But there are a few elementary facts that need to be either stated or restated. Just like Aristotle and Theophrastus, Damascius and

[1] Extrapolating from the details in Diogenes Laertios 9.34.

> Olympiodorus can be very convenient sources of information when handled with care; and in contrast to Aristotle and Theophrastus, they have the advantage that they had no real taste for deviousness or wilful misrepresentation of their predecessors….
>
> Damascius' frequent eccentricities as an interpreter of earlier philosophers are one thing; but a liar he was not. If he says that the same basic arrangement of underworld rivers which we find in the *Phaedo* was described … in a poem by Orpheus, then it was described in a poem ascribed to Orpheus.[2]

Not a great deal is known about Mochos. However, Strabo, who died in about 25 CE, states:[3]

> εἰ δὲ δεῖ Ποσειδωνίῳ πιστεῦσαι, καὶ τὸ περὶ τῶν ἀτόμων δόγμα παλαιόν ἐστιν ἀνδρὸς Σιδονίου Μώχου πρὸ τῶν Τρωϊκῶν χρόνων γεγονότος.
>
> If indeed Poseidonios is to be believed, then the old teaching about atoms was of a man from Sidon, Mochos, born before Trojan times.[4]

Strabo surely means us to understand that he is unsure whether Poseidonios is to be credited. The passage in question follows upon Strabo's praise of the Phoenicians for their development of certain sciences and excellence in philosophy. He seems to think that the statement has sufficient credibility to be mentioned. Interestingly, in the "Mochos" article of the first edition of Pauly, Grohmann, referring to Strabo and to the finds at Ras Shamra, writes:

> Dass dieser Mythos derjenigen Epoche angehört, in welche M. von Strabon gesetzt wird, kann nicht mehr bestritten werden.[5]

As we saw, the early Christian writer Tatian the Assyrian accepted Mochos as a Greek-writing historian of Phoenicia. Josephus attempts to preempt criticism of his account of the longevity of the patriarchs by declaring that he is supported in this

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[2] Kingsley (1995b) pp. 120-121.

[3] Strabo (1930) 16.2.24.

[4] Sextus Empiricus states that Poseidonios attributed to "the Phoenician gentleman" Mochos, the atomic theory of Demokritos and Epikouros: cited in Edelstein and Kidd (1989) pp. 253, 286.

[5] Grohmann in Pauly-Wissowa *RE* 15.2, column 2314.

by Mochos, one of several persons named as author of an account of the Phoenicians.[6]

To return to Strabo, the question arises, who and how reliable was Poseidonios? Born about 135 in Apamea, and having died about 51 BCE, Poseidonios was a Syrian Greek who became the leading Stoic of his day. Educated in Athens, and continuing his studies in travels which took him as far afield as Spain and Gaul, he settled in Rhodes. Such was his reputation that Cicero entreated him to write a history of Cicero's consulship.[7] Writing in the *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, Kidd states that in ancient times Poseidonios was famed for his "respect for the facts, consistency derived from deductive proof, and understanding sprung from explanation of the causes of phenomena".[8]

The statement that Mochos was the originator of the theory of atoms acquires some additional plausibility when we examine the little which is known of Demokritos, who is said to have been one of the founders of that theory. Demokritos' Greek biographers stated categorically that he was a pupil of certain Magi and Chaldeans and learnt from them theology and astrology.[9] Laertios also reports the statement that Demokritos' studies took him on travels to Egypt, Persia, the Red Sea, and even India.[10] That he travelled to Persia and studied with the Magi and Chaldeans (they were often confused from at least the fourth century BCE by the Greeks) can be taken as certain. The other destinations, and in particular India, seem to be treated more cautiously by Laertios.[11]

Poseidonios' testimony is therefore plausible and in so far as it can be compared with our other information, is entirely

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[6] Josephus *Jewish Antiquities* 1.107.

[7] See the general account in Long (1974) pp. 216-222.

[8] *OCD* p. 1232. A great deal of research has been recently conducted into Poseidonios' view of history, and especially, his theories of causation in history. Ultimately, I decided not to deal with this as it did not seem to me to bear sufficiently directly upon the question of Poseidonios' reliability.

[9] Diogenes Laertios 9.34.

[10] Diogenes Laertios 9.35.

[11] Diogenes Laertios 9.35 and Kingsley (1995b) pp. 200-202 on the confusion between Magi and Chaldeans, and p. 201 and n. 183 on Demokritos' travels.

consistent.[12] In other words, in providing material from Mochos, Damaskios has preserved the work of an important thinker who produced not only advanced thought (the theory of atoms), but also seems to have been a mythographer. I now turn to the relevant passage in Damaskios:

> Σιδώνιοι δὲ κατὰ τὸν αὐτὸν συγγραφέα πρὸ πάντων Χρόνον ὑποτίθενται καὶ Πόθον καὶ Ὀμίχλην, Πόθου δὲ καὶ Ὀμίχλης μιγέντων ὡς δυεῖν ἀρχῶν Ἀέρα γενέσθαι καὶ Αὔραν, Ἀέρα μὲν ἄκρατον τοῦ νοητοῦ παραδηλοῦντες, Αὔραν δὲ τὸ ἐξ αὐτοῦ κινούμενον τοῦ νοητοῦ ζωτικὸν προτύπωμα. Πάλιν δὲ ἐκ τούτων ἀμπφοῖν Ὦτον γεννηθῆναι κατὰ τὸν νοῦν, οἶμαι, τὸν νοητόν.
>
> Ὡς δὲ ἔξωθεν Εὐδήμου τὴν Φοινίκων εὑρίσκομεν κατὰ Μῶχον μυθολογίαν, Αἰθὴρ ἦν τὸ πρῶτον καὶ Ἀὴρ αἱ δύο αὗται ἀρχαί, ἐξ ὧν γεννᾶται Οὐλωμός, ὁ νοητὸς θεός, αὐτὸ, οἶμαι, τὸ ἄκρον τοῦ νοητοῦ· ἐξ οὗ ἑαυτῷ συνελθόντος γεννηθῆναι φασι Χουσωρόν, ἀνοιγέα πρῶτον, εἶτα ᾠόν, τοῦτο μέν, οἶμαι, τὸν νοητὸν νοῦν λέγοντες, τὸν δὲ ανοιγέα Χουσωρόν, τὴν νοητὴν δύναμιν ἅτε πρώτην διακρίνασαν τὴν ἀδιάκριτον φύσιν, εἰ μὴ ἄρα μετὰ τὰς δύο ἀρχὰς τὸ μὲν ἄκρον ἐστιν Ἄνεμος ὁ εἷς, τὸ δὲ μέσον οἱ δύο ἄνεμοι Λίψ τε καὶ Νότος· ποιοῦσι γάρ πως καὶ τούτους πρὸ τοῦ Οὐλωμοῦ· ὁ δὲ Οὐλωμὸς αὐτὸς ὁ νοητὸς εἴη νοῦς, ὁ δὲ ἀνοιγεὺς Χουσωρὸς ἡ μετὰ τὸ νοητὸν πρώτη τάξις, τὸ δὲ Ὠὸν ὁ οὐρανος· λέγεται γὰρ ἐξ αὐτοῦ ῥαγέντος εἰς δύο γενέσθαι Οὐρανὸς καὶ Γῆ, τῶν διχοτομημάτων ἑκάτερον.
>
> The Sidonians, according to the same author suggest Time before all, and Desire and Mist. When Desire and Mist had mixed as two principles,[13] Aer came into being, and Aura.[14]

[12] In the next chapter, I return to the links between Phoenicia and "Chaldeans" for which the evidence is impeccable.

[13] Attridge and Oden (1981) p. 103, translate as "two first principles", a translation at least as good as mine.

[14] These words are very difficult to interpret. Further, Mochos was writing just at the time when the sense of the words was least stable: Kingsley (1995b) pp. 16-17. Attridge and Oden have translated by simply transliterating the Greek: e.g., "Aer and Aura". In my opinion, this is best. It avoids unnecessarily limiting the sense of the Greek term. I do not

> Aer is unmixed intellect, they intimate. Aura is set moving by him perceptible to the mind (i.e., Aer) (and is) the prepared mould of the living. Then from both these Oton (*possibly* Otos) was born, according to the mind; I think he is the intelligible.
>
> Outside of Eudemos, we find the Phoenician mythology according to Mochos. Aither was the first, and Aer; these are the two same principles from which was begotten Oulomos[15] the (first) deity that intellect can perceive, and he, I think, is unmixed mind. From him, when he joined with himself, they say Khousros the first opener was born, and then, an egg. And this (egg) I think, is, they say, the intelligible mind, while the opener Khousros is the intelligible power[16] inasmuch as it first brought differentiation into the universe when it was indistinct (*lit.* undecided).
>
> Otherwise, after the two principles (Aither and Aer) in the heights (was) Wind, the unified (*lit.* the one), and in the middle were two winds, Wet-Wind[17] and South-Wind. For somehow they make these prior to Oulomos. This Oulomos himself is the mind that may be intelligible. The opener Khousros is the first order among whatever is intelligible. The egg is sky, for it is said that from it, when cracked into two, sky and earth came into existence, each from one of the equal halves.

The name *Otos* or *Oton* (it is in the accusative but may not be declinable, we simply do not know) is odd. This is not the figure of Greek mythology who was the brother of Ephialtes. I think there are two possibilities: (a) this could be from the Greek noun for "ear": οὖς, or, and perhaps more probably, (b) it is a Greek transcription of the Sumerian name of the sun god, Utu. I return to this below.

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understand why Attridge and Oden then translate "Heaven" and "Earth" later on.

15 This is not a Greek word, and I think it must be significant that having just used two Greek words, here Mochos uses a Phoenician word. Therefore, I leave this word in transliteration.

16 Attridge and Oden inconsistently translate νοητόν as "intellectual" or "perceived by intellect" or "intellect". I have rendered it as meaning "perceptible to the intellect", changing the precise phrasing but not the meaning to suit the context.

17 Λίψ is the south west wind, and takes its name from the verb λείβω "to pour": LSJ.

Before turning to analyze this passage, the question arises, is it worthwhile to consider it at all? Is it not simply a Greek cosmogony dressed up with a couple of outlandish terms in order to look Phoenician? After all, if it is genuine, then it would go a long way to establishing that the Solar Pericope comprises authentic Phoenician doctrine, for Mochos is cited as saying that "This Oulomos himself is the mind that may be intelligible", and as we shall see from Krahmalkov, only Šamaš is described as *ʿlm* in ancient Phoenicia.

The passage is authentically Phoenician, for two main reasons: first, as West observes, it is not a Greek concept to place Time at the very genesis.[18] However, the concept that Time was "a cosmic progenitor" was known in the east by the fourth century BCE, if not, indeed somewhat earlier.[19]

Second, there are similarities between this material and other texts which cannot have been influenced by Greek philosophy. Putting aside the connections with Philo,[20] the similarities are overwhelming in favor of an ancient Semitic tradition:

> (πόθος in Eudemos corresponds to) … the Semitic *ruah*, which can indeed carry the sense of amorous desire, but is also the divine wind that beats over the dark mass of waters in Genesis 1:2. Its union with ὀμίχλη in Eudemus' account (giving birth to ἀήρ and αὖρα), and with the χάος θολερὸν ἐρεβῶδες in Philo's is thus parallel to the conjunction of *ruah* and *tehom* in Genesis. There is a fourth occurrence of the idea in another cosmogony which has been embodied in Philo's narrative in disguise: the Gulf Wind impregnates a woman called Baau, and she gives birth to Aion and Protogonos. Philo interpreted the name Baau as Night, but it is probably related to the (*tohu* and) *bohu* of the same verse of Genesis.[21]

West, to the best of my knowledge the only author to have prepared a considered evaluation of this material, concluded that Eudemos' Phoenician cosmogony was authentically Phoenician, and that there are significant points of agreement and near-agreement between the anonymous Sidonian account of Eudemos and that attributed to Mochos. West accepted that Oulomos must

[18] West (1971) p. 28.

[19] West (1971) pp. 28-36.

[20] Philo is controversial and will be considered below.

[21] West (1971) p. 29.

be the late Phoenician *ʿlm*, which itself corresponds to Hebrew *ʿlm*, "Remote Time or Eternity", and that "Khousros" is "recognizable as the Kṯr-and-Ḫss of Ugaritic texts".[22] Significantly, West draws the same conclusion that I did, that: "onomatologically, the *ʿlm* of Mochos of Sidon is simply a hypostasis from such titles (sc. *šmš ʿlm*), and the Egyptian evidence suggests that Shamash *ʿlm* may have been the direct model".[23]

OULOMOS

To the best of our knowledge of ancient Greece and Phoenicia, "Oulomos" can only be a transcription of *ʿlm*. No other possibility is open on the evidence. That word was used in Phoenicia only of *šmš*.[24] If this passage is, as it appears to be, authentic, then all of these abstract words such as Aer and Aither are substitutes for more concrete words and even proper names of Phoenician deities. We do not know who these deities were, but we have a clue. If Šamaš is *ʿlm*, then it is open that another deity was known as Aer or Aither and so on. This has direct relevance to a consideration of the Aphrodite Pericope, where Julian has another deity acting in concert with Helios, as Mochos has other deities acting in concert with Oulomos.

We now come to perhaps the crux of this chapter. The similarity between the words *Oulomos* and *ʿlm* is striking, as the *-os* signifies the standard Greek masculine nominative singular. This is accepted by all writers on the topic. Cross, for example, states:

> The name ʿOlam also appears in the Phoenician theogony of Moschos reported by Damascius in the late Phoenician form transliterated into Greek: *oulom(os)*. Its context strongly suggests, however, that it applies not to a god of the cult such as ʿEl, but to one of the old gods belonging to the abstract theogonic pairs. This would equate Moschos' *oulomos* with Philo Byblius' *Aion* of the pair *Aion* and *Protogonos*, and, of course, the *Aion(s)* of later Gnosticism.[25]

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[22] West (1971) p. 29.

[23] West (1971) p. 36. West refers to *šmš ʿlm* in the Karatepe text.

[24] Krahmalkov (2000) p. 372.

[25] Cross (1973) p. 18. Cross repeats this identification of *Aion* and *Oulomos* at p. 50.

We must now carefully retrace our steps. First of all, let us take Phoenicia itself. Krahmalkov provides two listings for the word *ʿlm*.[26] The first is as a masculine noun meaning "Eternity". Krahmalkov cites an example of this word used in the context of having prepared one's grave while alive. The phrase is *mškb nḥty lʿlm*: "resting place in peace of eternity", which he then rephrases as "eternal resting place in peace". Krahmalkov then provides cross-references to the phrases *bt ʿlm* "tomb (*lit.* house of eternity)", *ʿd ʿlm* "always", *ʿd ʿlm kqdm* "regularly", and *lʿlm* "forever". Of these, the only phrase which merits further mention is *ʿd ʿlm kqdm*, for *qdm* is the "ancient practice", a concept which was personified as Kadmos.[27]

Krahmalkov's entry for *ʿlm* II represents the deity "ULOM", translated as "Eternity, Eternal One". He notes that this is attested only in Damaskios, and nowhere else, whether Phoenician or Punic. The possible correspondence to El-Olam in the Hebrew Bible is noted, but not categorically affirmed. Krahmalkov adds:

> However, in Phoenician religion of the first millennium BC, the term *ʿlm* is found exclusively in the divine name of *šmš ʿlm*, "Eternal Semes" (sun, sun-goddess).[28]

Krahmalkov cites two texts as illustrating this. I shall not pursue the Gnostic or magical texts which Cross referred to. In my view, after examining a number of these, they represent late developments, and are unconnected with the Phoenician solar theology. I have already dealt with the Ugaritic material in chapter 7, and with the Phoenician inscriptions in chapter 8.

In Greek, αἰών was "a period of existence, lifetime, age, era" and could be used in phrases to mean "forever". The parallel with the Phoenician *ʿlm* is not precise. But it is sufficiently close to justify using it as a working hypothesis.

We are told by Mochos that Oulomos is the intelligible deity, and probably the first intelligible deity. This makes sense in reference to the sun, for it is the most visible object of all: it impinges on one's senses; it demands to be seen and felt, as it were. As noted, the statement that he is pure intellect dovetails with the

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[26] Krahmalkov (2000) p. 372.

[27] Krahmalkov (2000) p. 424.

[28] Krahmalkov (2000) p. 372. The texts are KAI 9 and 26 (Karatepe), which have been cited above.

Solar Pericope, as does the subsequent development of the cosmos according to Mochos. Mochos is quoted further about Oulomos, especially in relation to the winds. However, we are not the only ones who find it difficult to understand what is meant. Damaskios seems unable to follow his source, as he is not clear on how the Wind and Wet-Wind and South-Wind can precede Oulomos. We can hardly expect to be clear where Damaskios felt bound to confess his confusion.

First it is desirable to consider this material in more detail. The Sidonian cosmology is taken from Eudemos of Rhodes, a peripatetic scholar.[29] Mind—represented by Aer—is necessary for the patterning of life. This Aer is the highest principle which is intelligible. It follows that the χρόνος (time) which is found here and is given priority is *unintelligible* to us. For Eudemos' Sidonians, then, this χρόνος is unlikely therefore to be the time we know and nothing else. Even if all we knew about χρόνος was that it had preceded the coming into being of motion, we would have to investigate it. But we also know that it subsists at a stage, or on a plane, which is incomprehensible to the mind. I suggest that this first principle may have been understood to be *eternity*, even if it may also have, in some way, encompassed passing time. Perhaps, for example, while *ʿlm* is not cited by name in Eudemos' account (or the little we have of it), it has appeared here as an "unintelligible χρόνος".

Next, we must examine the word νοητός. While we can translate this word used by—or on behalf of—Eudemos' Sidonians as "intelligible", we do not know what was connoted by it. Let us assume that this is an accurate translation of a Phoenician equivalent. Does it simply mean *comprehensible*? The following is speculative, but it is the only hypothesis I can formulate, and it has the advantage of methodological accountability. Let us assume for a moment that νοητός has the same meaning in both Eudemos and in Mochos: νοητός will then be *ʿlm* because of the terms of Mochos. If this is so, and if it was correct to suggest that χρόνος was Šamaš as eternity (*ʿlm*), then it follows that the mysterious Oton of Mochos and the νοητός of Eudemos must be Šamaš as the visible sun which marks the passage of time here on earth. I am drawing a long bow, but this would at least tie in with what we saw

[29] Ebach (1979) p. 433.

in the snakebite texts at Ugarit, that Šapaš is the deity who hears the prayers of the mare. The sun is thus the "ear" of the sky, as well as its "eye", so to speak. Further, the connection with Julian's Phoenician Pericopes could hardly be clearer. The sun has different roles: as the sun in the sky, it is the source of what is intelligible and hence corresponds to νοῦς.

If *Oton* is "Ear", then it may stand for "wisdom, understanding, attention". The Phoenician word for "ear" is, so far as my researches revealed, unattested. However, in Akkadian it is *uznum* and means "ear, wisdom, understanding, attention, awareness".[30] The Hebrew word א ז ן primarily means "ear", but is used in phrases to signify understanding, and intelligence. The Arabic cognate, أ ذ ن means "ear" and can also be used in phrases concerning learning. The link between "ear" and "attention" is also known from Sumer, and is probably a universal connotation, given the role of the ear in listening and thus learning and becoming wiser. As we saw at the end of chapter 9, it is explicitly stated of Šamaš in the Mesopotamian tradition that he hears the prayers of those who seek justice.

However, as stated, I do not rule out the possibility that Oton may be the Sumerian deity Utu. This is not impossible. There survive Greek magical texts which mention Erešhkigal, the Sumerian goddess of the underworld. For example, she appears on a leaden tablet from Bithynia, to be dated to the third or fourth century CE, and she is mentioned at least 12 times in the surviving magical papyri.[31] My suggestion has the plausibility of making sense of the equivalence between the terms Oton and νοητός in Eudemos' account, and νοητός and Oulomos in Mochos, and between *ʿlm* and Šamaš in the Phoenician tradition.[32]

This entire passage from Mochos, and in particular, this word "intelligible" was dark to Ebach. After expressing how difficult the prose was, he stated: "Dies gilt besonders für das häufig verwandte νοητός, das Stereotyp mit 'geistig wahrnehmbar' wiedergegeben

[30] Black, Green, and Postgate (1999) p. 431.

[31] Cormack (1951) pp. 26-27 (line 6) and p. 33. She is also in the text quoted by Martinez (1991) p. 24.

[32] The persistence of the Sumerian tradition is noted in Geller (1997) *passim*.

wird".[33] But he did not go on to try and place side by side the occurrence of that word in the two brief sources.

Finally, it appears from Damaskios' phrasing that Mochos tradites the mythology of some other Phoenicians, although he was himself a Sidonian. However, if his Phoenician philosophy is Sidonian, then it shows how much diversity could exist within one city. Aither and Aer are beyond thought. Damaskios thinks that Oulomos is "unmixed mind". This is yet more evidence, and—I suggest—potent evidence that the Solar Pericope represents authentically Phoenician views. In accordance with the Aphrodite Pericope, the sun stands above the creation of earthly life. Here, it is not Aphrodite, but "the opener" who breaks the cosmic egg into two equal halves. The complex references to what is "intelligible" and "mind" are further reason, I propose, to see this as an indication that we are now speaking about gods known to and worshipped in the Phoenician world.

The "Khousros" referred to here is the same deity who was known in Ugarit, even if his role seems a little different. In both Phoenicia and Ugarit, he is the craftsman of the gods, and is associated if not identified with Ptah, whose name could be construed in Semitic languages as "opener".

PHILO OF BYBLOS

Philo of Byblos was an antiquarian and grammarian of the late first and early second centuries CE. His praenomen was probably Herennius Severus.[34] The *Phoenician History* (the original title was either Φοινικική ἱστορία or Φοινικικά) is chiefly known to us from the excerpts in Eusebius' *Praeparatio Evangelica*.[35] Comparisons of the passage cited in Eusebius with citations of these same passages elsewhere, when available for scrutiny, are said to demonstrate that Eusebius has accurately cited Philo.[36] However, the number of such passages is not large, and we know that much was omitted, as Philo's work filled eight volumes. For example, the two etymologies noted in Lydus are nowhere in Eusebius' fragments, and these seem at least a little different from what is to be found in

[33] Ebach (1979) p. 433.
[34] NPEA, vol. 5, col. 410. Attridge and Oden (1981) p. 1.
[35] NPEA, vol. 5, col. 410.
[36] Baumgarten (1981) pp. 38 and 92-93; and Van Seters (1982) p. 206.

Eusebius' quotations. Eusebius cites Philo only where he believes that Philo will help him make a point for Christianity against paganism.

It is not necessary to commence a study of Philo by saying something about the *Praeparatio* in which most of the fragments are found. This has been adequately dealt with by Baumgarten.[37] It is sufficient to observe that while this issue is crucial to a consideration of Eusebius' work, it is not essential when combing Philo for evidence of Phoenician religion. Eusebius and Lydus have preserved only extracts, and we cannot reject their testimony simply by reference to Eusebius' agenda in defending Christianity against paganism or even by reference to Lydus' sentimental affection for paganism.[38]

When one turns to the *Phoenician History* itself, one is struck, on analysis, by the fact that it seems a heterogeneous document. As Baumgarten demonstrated, the cosmogony (together with the zoogony) is exceptional within the parameters of the work in that they are the only portions which were composed in the form of poetic parallelism.[39] I would modify this only by adding that in the work *as we have it*, it is the only example of parallelism. However, Baumgarten's conclusion is surely correct: it would appear that Philo used various sources, and probably sources of diverse "origin and date" in his writing.[40] Another argument for the use of different sources in Philo is that the deity Mot's name is sometimes vocalized as "Mouth".[41]

When one takes into account the contents of Philo's material and its similarity to Ugaritic literature, Baumgarten is correct to conclude that:

> the analysis of the form and style of Philo's cosmogony indicates its ultimate Phoenician source and suggests a date

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[37] Baumgarten (1981) pp. 36-38.

[38] On Lydus, see Maas (1992) pp. 4-6 and his allegory of the "silver vessel", which, as Maas shows, represents the heritage of Rome, and which is broken up into pieces to be sold. This image shows how Lydus felt.

[39] Baumgarten (1981) pp. 98-100.

[40] Baumgarten (1977) p. 41.

[41] Baumgarten (1977) p. 143.

> after the second millennium BC, but does not suggest a more precise date for the more proximate source.[42]

However, I disagree with Baumgarten when he then proceeds from here to argue that the contents show that the material is quite recent. I do not intend to deal with this in detail here, but shall take one point alone. He states that the reference to Khousor in the section dealing with discoveries demonstrates that the material Philo uses is recent, and not, as is often thought, that it was ancient. Baumgarten defends this on the basis that in Philo, Khousor is an iron worker, and Ugarit did not possess iron.[43] But this is too simplistic. First of all, as Baumgarten himself notes, this need only evidence that Philo's "sources were at least reworked in the iron age".[44]

Second, there clearly is ancient material here: there was a deity named Khousor and he was an artisan and craftsman. That he worked iron is only incidental. Baumgarten surely does not suggest that all knowledge of the ancient Khousor had died out, and then later on, in the Hellenistic period, someone in Phoenicia independently contrived a deity named Khousor who just happened to be a smith? Khousor is also known throughout Phoenician history. As we saw, he is mentioned in Mochos. There it is said that Oulomos created "Khousor the first opener" from himself. Khousor was described as the intelligible power "inasmuch as it first brought differentiation into the universe when it was indistinct". This is the essence of Khousor's role: he fashions. As Lipinski observes, he was an artisan and architect, and his name meant "expert".[45] Further, he appears not infrequently in Phoenician onomastics over a large range of time and space, and if he can be identified with the deity *ʾrš*, then his appearance in names is even more frequent.[46] So, Khousor was part of a lengthy Phoenician tradition, and one should consider this in determining the possible antiquity of Philo's sources.

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[42] Baumgarten (1981) p. 103.
[43] Baumgarten (1980) pp. 167 and 264.
[44] Baumgarten (1980) p. 167.
[45] Lipinski (1995) pp. 108-109.
[46] Lipinski (1995) pp. 109-112.

In other words, *pace* Baumgarten, what Khousor being an ironworker shows is that Philos' sources are a mixture of ancient and more recent materials.

It is not a better argument for the lateness of the material in Philo to say that Sanchuniathon is not attested before Philo,[47] as so few Phoenicians are attested at all. Phoenician literature has not come down to us with very few exceptions. The vast majority of Greeks simply disdained the languages and literature of their eastern neighbors.[48] In Morris' pithy phrase, "Hellenism sundered Greeks and orientals".[49]

Porphyry, who was a lot closer to the critical moment than we are, and as I contended, was possibly literate in Phoenician, stated:

> Sanchuniathon of Beirut gives the truest account concerning the Jews, since it agrees best with their places and their names. For he took the treatises of Hierombalos (viz. Jeremiah), the priest of the god Ieuo, who dedicated his work to Abibalos, the king of Beirut. (Hierombalos' work was) accepted as correct by Abibalos by those who investigated the truth in his time.[50]

Although he argues against the reliability of this, Baumgarten provides grounds for its plausibility, when he says: "In view of the close geographical, linguistic, and ethnic connections of Jews and Phoenicians, works on the Jews might be approved by Phoenician scholars or Jews might be discussed by an author like Sanchuniathon".[51] It has been often observed that here, Porphyry refers to a work of Sanchuniathon on the Jews, and not a Phoenician history. A more critical point is that—according to Bickerman—it was rare for a religious work of the Ancient Near East to have a named author. Rather, this is a Greek practice. The upshot then, is that the "Sanchuniathon" source is Hellenistic.[52]

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[47] Baumgarten (1977) p. 51.
[48] Coleman (1997) pp. 200-201.
[49] Morris (2000) p. 102.
[50] Baumgarten (1977) p. 43.
[51] Baumgarten (1977) p. 59.
[52] Baumgarten (1981) p. 51.

It is not disputed that "Sanchuniathon" was a Phoenician name, probably being *Sknytn*, "(The god) Skn gave".[53] But it is simply not true to state that Ancient Near East religious texts did not name a human author: the texts from Ugarit did, and Wyatt believes that Ilimilku may have reworked the Baal tradition on the occasion of a royal wedding.[54] Further, there is the precedent of the Psalms, Proverbs, the Song of Songs, and the prophetic books of the Hebrew Bible. The attributions may be false, they may even be pseudonymous, but they nonetheless disprove Bickerman's statement.[55] Further, in Mesopotamia the catalogue of texts and authors found in Ashurbanipal's library is replete with the names of authors—for example, religious texts were attributed to authors such as Adapa and Sîn-leqe-unninni.[56] I see no reason to deny that there was a Phoenician writer called Sanchuniathon—in fact, the testimony of Porphyry in conjunction with that of Philo would indicate that there was such a writer. Baumgarten however, dismisses Porphyry's evidence on this point by alleging that the dedication of books was not "widespread" prior to Hellenistic times.[57] In fact, he states:

> The most likely explanation of Porphyry's account of Sanchuniathon, Hierombalos priest of YHWH, and Abibalos king of Beirut … is to consider the entire account sheer fantasy.[58]

Baumgarten's treatment of this issue raises questions. In making out his argument for "sheer fantasy", he treats the date given, that is, before the Trojan War, as an integral part of the statement, and treats that war as having taken place in the

[53] Baumgarten (1977) pp. 44-45. Baumgarten deals with the god *Skn* at pp. 45-49. Baumgarten's critique of Albright's opinions about Sanchuniathon, are sound: p. 54.

[54] Wyatt (2001) p. 102.

[55] There is also *Qohelet*, but in view of the arguments that this is a Hellenistic work, I omit it.

[56] See Lambert (1962) and also Machinist and Tadmor (1993) *passim*. It is not clear if Sîn-leqe-unninni represents a person, a family or a guild, or the extent to which he was a legendary character. But the most natural reading would be that he was the author of the Standard Babylonian Gilgameš epic.

[57] Baumgarten (1981) p. 267.

[58] Baumgarten (1981) p. 53. The pejorative phrase is repeated at p. 55

thirteenth century BCE.[59] But the question is when Porphyry believed the Trojan War had taken place, and whether Porphyry may not have made an error in this respect. I am not aware of any evidence fixing when Porphyry believed the Trojan War took place. In fact, Baumgarten goes on in the appendix to chapter 4 to show that Eusebius has substituted his own dating system for Porphyry's in a critical respect, with the result that we are not aware when Porphyry dated the Trojan War.[60] The impression one receives is that "before the Trojan War" simply means before the Greeks kept accurate records of their history. Put another way, it seems to mean "at a period when the Greeks describe their world in mythological terms". In any respect, we do not know when Porphyry dated that war.

To return to the possible Phoenician Yahweh cult, although Baumgarten provided the Greek text of Lydus' quote from Philo on the deity Yahweh in Phoenicia,[61] Baumgarten did not consider this material or its significance. I would contend that there is reasonable evidence for a Phoenician cult of Yahweh. With the citation from Philo in Lydus, we have two references in literature to a Phoenician deity Yahweh: Porphyry and Philo.[62] Porphyry is cited in Eusebius, and lived after Philo. Lydus cannot be dependent upon Eusebius, for nowhere does Eusebius quote Porphyry *in this respect*.

Then we have Baumgarten's skepticism concerning the detail of the dedication of books. It is correct that this practice is best evidenced from the Hellenistic period on, but this is, again, an argument from silence. Why can it not have occurred beforehand? For example, on Wyatt's view, the Baal epic was probably prepared for a royal wedding.[63]

Further, although it is not an entire book, Psalm 45 is addressed to the king, and this is probably Ahab on his marriage to Jezebel.[64] It may be that the dedication of books in fact began in

[59] As must be implied by the reference at Baumgarten (1981) p. 55.

[60] Baumgarten (1981) pp. 61-62.

[61] Baumgarten (1981) p. 23.

[62] Baumgarten is aware that we are dealing with two different traditions in Porphyry and Philo, at least when Sanchuniathon is in issue: Baumgarten (1981) p. 48.

[63] Wyatt (2001) p. 102.

[64] Treves (undated) p. 45.

Phoenicia and Israel. Certainly, Baumgarten's argument on this point is insufficient to set aside Porphyry's testimony, let alone convict him of "sheer fabrication". Baumgarten's method is not sound: he states that the concern to fix dates around the time of the Trojan War "probably is no accident and reflects the concern of barbarian historians of the Hellenistic period to prove their native sources were at least as old if not older than Homer".[65] But does this apply to Porphyry? Porphyry, it will be recalled, defended Hellenistic civilization and religion against Christianity and its deity. Porphyry is not one to invent an ancient Yahweh worship, even in Beirut, to slight the Greeks and magnify the Levantines.

Baumgarten does not offer an instance of where Porphyry ever wrote anything similar. There is no analysis of Porphyry's concerns to show that he possessed the motive. In any event, even if he did have the motive, what is the evidence that he fabricated his account? It is not cogent to argue that someone had a motive to make a false statement and therefore they did. It is even less impressive to fail to demonstrate that the motive is properly attributed to them. Reference to Porphyry's own works would have challenged if not refuted this idea. For example, in his treatise on abstinence from animal foods, Περὶ ἀποχῆς ἐμψύχων, Porphyry deals with notions held by all sorts of people, Greeks, Egyptians, Phoenicians, and others, but by far the bulk of the discussion is of the ideas of the Greek schools: Epicureans, Stoics, and so on. In fact, Porphyry even uses the terminology of "Hellenes" and "barbarians".[66]

There is not a word in this text which would lead one to even guess that Porphyry was at all associated with the Phoenicians. When they are mentioned, they are mentioned in neutral terms.[67] Porphyry mentions the Phoenicians so rarely in his surviving works that it has not been possible to find any other material suitable for use as a test case: that is, material where the Phoenicians, the Greeks, and others are mentioned. So on this point at least, Baumgarten's hypothetical reason why Porphyry would have simply made up a complete falsehood, falls short in that there is no evidence for it, what evidence there is tells against it, and

[65] Baumgarten (1981) p. 57.
[66] Porphyry, *De l'abstinence* 13.5.
[67] Porphyry, *De l'abstinence* 14.4.

Baumgarten's methodology in marshalling this contention is at the very least suspect.

When Porphyry stated that Sanchuniathon wrote before the Trojan War, he may well have been drawing an inference from his knowledge of Greek history: he was after all, an expert on Homer.[68] Given Porphyry's championship of Hellenistic paganism and love of Homer (apparent in the *Homeric Questions* which I cited) it is more plausible to see Porphyry as ascribing a date in the period before the Trojan War to all those antique matters which he could not correlate with Greek history because they occurred before anything known to Porphyry had taken place in Greece. But there is available an even simpler thesis: Porphyry was relying upon authoritative material circulating in Greek language literature, perhaps Poseidonios or a source derived from Poseidonios, for his dating of Mochos. As we saw above, Strabo states that Poseidonios credited the atomic theory to Mochos the Sidonian, πρὸ τῶν Τρωϊκῶν χρόνων γεγονότος.[69] Whether this is Poseidonios' description, as sounds likely, or even if it is Strabo's, both authors died before Porphyry's birth. The fact that at least one and perhaps two writers, neither of whom could be accused of "philobarbarianism",[70] put Mochos before the Trojan War, means that to search for extraneous reasons to explain away Porphyry's account as "sheer fabrication" is not ultimately satisfying.

At the end of the day, the question of Philo's sources is a large one. My concern here is only to show that the dismissal of an authentic source known as Sanchuniathon is too simplistic.

Baumgarten concludes that the cosmogony "represents the impact of Greek rationalism on native Phoenician speculation".[71] But he is bound, by the evidence, to find that there is little reason to doubt that Philo did translate from Phoenician into Greek, and this undermines the thrust of his own argument.[72] As Baumgarten appreciates, another logical problem for those finding purely Greek sources in Philo is that Greek thought may have influenced the Phoenicians to stress and develop those ideas in their philosophy

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[68] He wrote *Homeric Questions* and *The Cave of the Nymphs*, an allegorical reading of a passage in the *Odyssey*.

[69] Strabo (1930) 16.2.24.

[70] Adopted from Plutarch's term for Herodotos in *Malice of Herodotos*.

[71] Baumgarten (1977) p. 157.

[72] Baumgarten (1977) p. 166.

which tallied with the Greek.[73] But the weakest of all links in Baumgarten are found when he concedes that the references to the Zophasemin must be explained by reference to the Phoenician language.[74] Further, Mot and Khousor are otherwise unattested between Ugarit and Philo himself,[75] and no modern scholar had any idea of the identity of the deities "Mot" and "Khousor" who are encountered in Philo, before the discovery and translation of the Ugaritic corpus.[76] Further, the *Phoenician History* would make Mot either "mud" or a wet putrefaction. Close analysis of other material demonstrates that in Ugarit, Mot's kingdom was "slushy and putrescent".[77]

Baumgarten also observed that in Philo, the 'mortal' Kronos assigned various countries to his allies, and that this is "very similar to Dt 32:8-9 … the verses explain how when Elioun divided up the nations he assigned a god to each and YHWH received Israel".[78] Then, in respect of Hesiod, who Philo said had taken much from the Phoenicians, Baumgarten concedes that a great deal in Philo is simply not in Hesiod. Baumgarten properly concludes:

> Had Philo made up his story from Hesiod we should not have expected such important differences. Therefore Philo must have been following some non-Hesiodic tradition, and in these circumstances it would seem most likely that this tradition was Byblian.[79]

Baumgarten's position is therefore seen to be inherently unstable. There is too much authentic Phoenician content in Philo to dismiss him altogether—especially as even Baumgarten is forced to concede that he probably could read Phoenician. Then, in trying to draw the line between what is reliably Phoenician and what is a Hellenistic reworking (putting aside the question of whether a culture can retain its authenticity through and despite interaction

73 Baumgarten (1977) p. 157.

74 Baumgarten (1981) p. 114.

75 Baumgarten (1981) pp. 112 and 166.

76 Baumgarten (1977) p. 122 n. 3.

77 Baumgarten (1977) pp. 142-143.

78 Baumgarten (1977) p. 253.

79 Baumgarten (1977) p. 277. He even notes that in Philo's account there is no one to correspond to Hesiod's Zeus: Baumgarten (1981) p. 217.

with other cultures),[80] Baumgarten errs on the side of Hellenism. But in order to achieve this, he needs to make Sanchuniathon into a veritable unknown,[81] and to do this, he is obliged to dismiss Porphyry's independent testimony to him, and even to other matters such as the Yahweh cult.

This does not deprive Baumgarten's detailed observations of their use, or even his general conclusions of all their value, but it does mean this: his final position, which is basically that in Philo we can assume we have a Hellenistic reworking unless otherwise proven, must be reversed. We can assume that in Philo we have Phoenician material unless it can be shown that Philo cannot have obtained it from Phoenicia, and is passing it off as Phoenician for some purpose. His ability to read Phoenician and his undoubted use of authentic Phoenician materials militates in favor of such a reading. To summarize: there is material in Philo which he could not have obtained from a Hellenistic source. What use then, can we make of Philo for this thesis?

PHILO AND PHOENICIAN SOLAR THEOLOGY

Philo makes a few brief comments about a person named "Aion" (Αἰῶν).[82] Baumgarten demonstrates that *Aion* is equivalent to *ʿlm*, and concedes that *ʿlm* was authentically Phoenician, and is identical with the Oulomos of Mochos. The evidence for this is overwhelming, and there is no need to repeat Baumgarten's demonstration.[83] More interesting, perhaps, is the strange relation between the sun and Mot. Philo has the line:

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[80] An example is the position of the sun itself. Gordon in *DDD* p. 395 states that "the bodies of the visible heavens received scant attention among the divinities sustained by the collective imagination in Archaic and Classical Greece". He goes on to argue that the increasing importance of the sun in Greek culture was, in many respects, stimulated by contact with the East (p. 397). Yet no one would deny that many solar ideas were assimilated into Greek thought as parts of an organic whole. See the passage from Levine (1998) p. 19 cited in chapter 4 about how the question of Hellenization was a question of "the interplay of a wide range of cultural forces …".

[81] Baumgarten (1981) p. 267: "Sanchuniathon, in sum, remains a shadowy figure of antiquity".

[82] Philo 807:20.

[83] Baumgarten (1981) pp. 146-148.

> καὶ ἐξέλαμψε Μώτ, ἥλιός τε καὶ σελήνη ἀστέρες τε καὶ ἄστρα μεγάλα
>
> Mot blazed forth, (as did) sun and moon, stars and the large stars.[84]

Baumgarten is in favor of amending this to make the celestial bodies the object and Mot the subject, that is, to read that Mot did the blazing, and in that action he created the sun and other bodies.[85] While he cannot see the point of the received text, it seems to me that the passage makes sense without amendment. Death and life are coeval: that is its message. Mot, Šamaš and the stars and planets, the Morning and Evening Star, are all deities of the same order, subject to the overgod, El. This was quite possibly a central feature of the original Phoenician polytheistic religion.

It seems to me important that the sun is connected here with death. As we saw when we dealt with the Ugaritic material: "the relationship between Šapšu and Motu is clearly not entirely antagonistic: the sun and the death gods seem to be part of the one ecology under Ilu".[86] This strikes me as such an unusual and peculiar feature in any religion that it is noteworthy. In my analysis of the Phoenician solar theology, I have contended that principles VI and VII see the living and the dead related together, and a symbol of that relationship is the association of the sun with each. Here, in Philo, we explicitly find a reference to the sun and death being coeval and co-existing. In Phoenicia, then, the sun and death were part of the one cosmic dispensation and economy.

Having said this, it appears that the Solar Pericope fits in quite well with Phoenician thought as it has been preserved. I now move on to examine some late writers, in particular, Pausanias and Lydus. Of these, by far the more important is Lydus.

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[84] Philo 806:25-26.

[85] Baumgarten (1981) pp. 116-117.

[86] Pages 190-191 above.

CHAPTER 11
OTHER LATE EVIDENCE

This chapter deals with the relevant classical authors who make reference to Phoenician philosophy, provided it is relevant to the Solar Pericope, whether directly or reasonably indirectly. There are few such authors, but what they say is of interest, as, like Julian, they comment on the Phoenician world from outside.[1] I cannot even extend the scope of this review to the Aphrodite Pericope because that would require a review of all the material related to The Goddess.[2]

PAUSANIAS

In his Ἕλλαδος Περιηγησέως or *Touring Description of Greece*,[3] Pausanias describes a visit to Eileithyia and the temenos of Asklepios, where there are ἀγάλματα (statues) of the god and of Hygeia ("Health"). He recounts the following exchange in the temple:

> ἐς ἀντιλογίαν ἀφίκετο ἀνήρ μοι Σιδόνιος ὃ ἐγνωκέναι τὰ ἐς τὸ θεῖον ἔφασκε Φοίνκας καὶ τά τε ἄλλα Ἑλλήνων βέλτιον καὶ δὴ καὶ Ἀσκληπιῷ πατέρα μὲν σφᾶς Ἀπόλλωνα ἐπιφημίζειν, θνητὴν δὲ γυναῖκα οὐδεμίαν μητέρα, Ἀσκληπιὸν μὲν γὰρ ἀέρα γένει τε ἀνθρώπων εἶναι καὶ πᾶσιν ὁμοίως ζῴοις ἐπιτήδειον πρὸς ὑγίειαν, Ἀπόλλωνα δὲ ἥλιον, καὶ αὐτὸν ὀρθότατα Ἀσκληπιῷ πατέρα ἐπονομάζεσθαι ὅτι ἐς τὸ ἁρμόζον ταῖς ὥραις ποιούμενος ὁ ἥλιος τὸν δρόμον μεταδίδωσι καὶ τῷ ἀέρι ὑγιείας.[4]

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[1] In each case, it is for the scholar to establish how reliable their information was.

[2] The use of capitals is intended to indicate that there is a substantial body of work which has fashioned a scholarly framework for the study of goddesses as manifestations of a key goddess, such as Isis became.

[3] I use the four volume edition of W. H. S. Jones (1964).

[4] 8.23.7-8

> … a Sidonian man entered an argument with me. He declared that the Phoenicians had better notions about the gods than the Greeks, giving as an instance that to Asklepios they assign Apollo as father, but no mortal woman as his mother. Asklepios, he went on, is air, bringing health to mankind and to animals likewise; Apollo is the sun, and most rightly is he named the father of Asklepios, because the sun by adapting his course to the seasons imparts to the air its healthfulness.

Pausanias, probably born around 115, was engaged in writing his *Touring Description* between about 155 and 174 or even 180 CE.[5] Little else is known about his life.[6] In fact, our one source for his name is a late one, and he gives away almost nothing about himself.[7] Certainly, however, Pausanias was an author of the second half of the second century. He seems to have been born in Magnesia, on Mount Sipylus in Lydia, and cherished a lifelong love of his hometown.[8]

While his book was intended to be a guide to Greece, to be taken on tour by educated people like himself, it was also meant to be a first class literary work which could be read for its own sake.[9] That it was a guide to Greece is significant: his audience was not only those who read Greek, but those who loved Greece.[10] As Habicht writes, "Pausanias … was a patriot, whose true love was Mother Greece, which he loved even more than the Greek colonial environment that was his home".[11] This is apparent in his horror at the idea that the Phoenicians might be in advance of the Greeks in religious philosophy. As a writer, he was generally accurate in

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[5] There is an increasing amount of literature on Pausanias. I have consulted some of this, but apart from Habicht, I have not found any of it of real use, because it does not deal with the issues which concern me. For example, *Pausanias Historien,* ed. Jean Bingen, Foundation Hardt, Geneva (1996) illustrates or qualifies points from my own reading of Pausanias, and Habicht. It adds nothing new to my thesis.

[6] Habicht (1985) pp. 8-12.

[7] Habicht (1985) pp. 9 and 141-142.

[8] Habicht (1985) pp. 13-15.

[9] Habicht (1985) pp. 20-21 and 95.

[10] Habicht (1985) p. 26.

[11] Habicht (1985) p. 104. He resented the Romans "because they dominate Greece" (p. 120).

relating facts when he had personal knowledge of a matter and was not reliant upon others.[12]

To return to Pausanias' conversation with the Sidonian, there are several interesting points here. First, this provides more evidence from which we can deduce that in the *interpretatio graeca*, Apollo, being the father of Asklepios, was identified with a Phoenician sun deity. This, again, supports my view that Šamaš could perhaps be seen as of the male gender in Phoenicia, even if "he" could also be female.[13] In this *interpretatio*, Asklepios was identified with Ešmoun. It has been suggested that if this Sidonian identified Apollo with the sun which gives healthy air, then he would have identified Apollo with the Phoenician deity Rašpu.[14]

Cicero, in *De natura deorum*, a work which he never completed, speaks of the importance of the study of philosophy, and of religion. These are important to him personally, and to the state, the *res publica*.[15] Cicero's notion of "philosophy" is tied to the various schools of ancient Greece and Rome.[16] He places the views of several schools before his readers in the form of a dialogue between several eminent persons at the house of Gaius Cotta.[17] The dialogue is particularly valuable precisely because Cicero is attempting to present a variety of views.

In Book Three, Cotta, the defender of religion,[18] is speaking, and states that there were several deities named Aesculapius, and

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[12] Habicht (1985) p. 142.

[13] See chapter 5, citing Krahmalkov (2000) p. 35, for the name "Semes is my father".

[14] P. Xella in *DCPP* p. 374.

[15] Cicero *De natura deorum* 1.1-4. The work is addressed to Brutus in 1.1.

[16] Cicero does not approve of the Pythagorean school, who when questioned, are "wont to reply, 'He said,' where 'He' is Pythagoras" ("… respondere solitos 'Ipse dixit;' 'ipse' autem erat Pythagoras"). *De natura deorum* 1.5.

[17] Cicero *De natura deorum* 1.6.

[18] This is perhaps an oversimplification, but without a full analysis of this dialogue, is, I think, fair. One anecdote which nicely illustrates Cotta's outlook is the one he approvingly tells of Stratonicus in 3.19. The people of Alabanda worshipped Alabandus, the founder of their city. When one of their number swore to Stratonicus that Alabandus was divine but Hercules was not, Stratonicus replied, "Let the wrath of Alabandus fall on me and that of Hercules on you".

one of them was born of Arsippus and Arsinoe.[19] "Arsippus" may be well be a Latinization of "Ršp", the ancient deity "Rešep". This name was probably originally pronounced "Rašpu", but scholars now follow the Hebrew. In Judaism, the deity was stripped of his supernatural qualities, and abstracted as "pestilence". In Hebrew the name became a segolate noun and thus lost its original pronunciation.[20] The goddess "Arsinoe" may simply be a common Persian name, or perhaps a corruption of "Astronoe", as known from Damaskios, who is mentioned as being infatuated with, and then slaying, a young hunter, "Asklepios".[21]

The central point to grasp is that the identification of one deity with another was not always exclusive. The method of the *interpretatio graeca* was not that of a detective searching for clues as to the "real identity" of an individual. The entry "Interpretatio" in *DCPP* states there was:

> … mis en oeuvre par les cultures anciennes pour parvenir à une identification réciproque des êtres surhumains vénérés dans les religions respectives. … Cette *i. graeca* et *romana* est souvent ambiguë et fuyante, dictée chaque fois par la volonté de "traduire" dans sa propre culture les différents aspects de l'entité divine en cause ou certaines facettes significatives.[22]

This puts the point very well. One cannot infer from Pausanias a simple and fixed equation between any two deities, say Asklepios and Ešmun. Rather, in this instance, for these stated reasons, modern scholars, faced with the *interpretatio graeca*, deduce that when the Sidonian referred to "Asklepios", he was probably speaking of the deity he knew in Phoenicia as "Ešmun". Likewise, we cannot presume to say that Apollo was the direct equivalent of Šamaš, but in some individual cases—those which stressed his role as sun god—the parallel was sound. In other instances, Apollo was identified with Ešmun, who as we have seen could be his son. This took place when Apollo was seen as the classical god of healing, eclipsing Asklepios in this respect.[23]

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[19] Cicero *De natura deorum* 3.22.
[20] Fulco (1976) pp. 63-65.
[21] *DCPP* p. 48.
[22] *DCPP* p. 230.
[23] *DCPP* p. 158, towards the end of the first paragraph on Ešmun.

That is, it is quite possible that while Asklepios was invariably identified with Ešmun, it was not always correct to say that Ešmun was to be identified with Asklepios.

The second point from this passage is that the proud Sidonian actually argues with Pausanias about the respective quality of the theology of the Phoenicians and that of the Greeks. The discussion about the sun is only an example, and although I have not quoted it, as it moves too far from my subject, Pausanias offers counter-arguments. These rivalries do not fall within my province, but they are worth noting. Habicht observes that Pausanias does not really answer the man's arguments: "… for Pausanias the statement is surprising—first, because he readily abandons the concept that the gods have a distinct personality, and, second, because his reply does not really correspond to the Phoenician's statement".[24]

Although such disputes about the relative merits of native cultures never ceased, and are unlikely to cease unless and until human nature is transformed, the tendency in the age of Iamblichos and Julian is to *harmonize* the contribution of the various peoples to the late antique world.

Third, what does it mean to say that Asklepios had "no mortal woman as his mother"? The background to this is the dispute between the Greek writers on which mortal woman was his mother. There was apparently some argument as to whether it was a Messenian named Arsinoe, the daughter of Leukippos, or Coronis, the daughter of Phlegyas, a Thessalian. This is interesting for what it says about the fashionable view that in ancient mythology the principle of non-contradiction did not apply. Apollodoros reported more fully, and presumably favored, the claims of Coronis.[25]

Most likely, the Sidonian meant that his deity had a divine mother (as opposed to no mother at all), as otherwise he could simply have said that the deity had no mother. One has the feeling that the Sidonian is serious in his claims, and also that he is making fun of the confusion of the Greek genealogists.

Fourth, the Phoenician identifies Asklepios with air, and states that the sun, by causing the rotation of the seasons, makes the air healthy. This is interesting, as it is suggestive of the sort of

[24] Habicht (1985) p. 158.

[25] Apollodoros (1921), vol. 2, *The Library*, 3.10.3. See the discussion of the abstruse evidence at n. 5, over pp. 13-15.

reductionism one finds in Philo of Byblos. That is, while the Sidonian is not stating that the deities once were men who have undergone a sort of apotheosis by acclaim, he is explaining the divine in terms of the natural. This passage is too slim to see it flourished as vindicating Philo of the "charge" of Euhemerism, but it is worth noting in view of what was said about Philo. Further, to see the deities as being the natural forces has a respectable pedigree: it is a feature of polytheism in Mesopotamia, Ugarit, and Egypt. It is hard to see any difference at all between this Sidonian's statement and the type of allegory we found in the Solar Pericope, where as I noted, the logic of the statement is that what is "A" is also in fact "B".

All in all, even allowing for the fact that we only have Pausanias' account of the conversation, the passage suggests that there were some proud Phoenicians, capable of conversing in Greek, eager to advance the name of Phoenician theology, and speculating about the role of the sun in the change of seasons, the composition and quality of the air, and thus in maintaining the health of all living creatures. In this respect, it is apt to note a recent opinion about this dialogue. Lightfoot, writes of this incident:

> The Phoenician, strikingly silent about the traditional Sidonian identification of their patron deity as Asklepios, instead launches into a philosophic discourse in which he asserts that Phoenician notions are superior to the Greek: Asklepios is really the fresh, healthy air. Nonsense, interjects Pausanias: this is a Greek idea just as much as a Phoenician one. To such an extent had these banal rationalizations become common currency that both cultures, Greek and Phoenician, could wrangle over them and claim them as their own.[26]

How, one wonders, does Lightfoot know what the Sidonian really said? She overlooks the fact that she only has Pausanias' account. Yet she descends to scoff. This entire thesis tries to show that the ideas some moderns hold in contempt may in fact have been much deeper.

However, perhaps the most important point of all is the fifth: it is the rotation of the sun which is important. The Sidonian does not simply say that the sun brings life. Rather, he says something

[26] Lightfoot (2000) p. 273.

quite specific, that "the sun by adapting his course to the seasons imparts to the air its healthfulness". The Sidonian seems to be saying that sun sits in different places in the sky during the course of the year, thus causing the changes in weather and atmosphere we know as the four seasons, and it is this change which brings health. It is the dynamism of the cycle, the alteration of the seasons, which makes for a healthy life. This supports the notion that there were some sophisticated notions of the sun and its role in the cosmos circulating in ancient Phoenicia.

LYDUS

Ioannes Laurentiou Philadelpheus Lydus ("John Lydus"), ca. 490-565 CE,[27] was an antiquarian and scholar, whose work is attracting an increasing amount of attention. Although born in Lydia, he made his career in Constantinople, where Justinian (527-565) had gathered a number of intellectuals in various fields, including the liberal arts.[28] Even in this distinguished company, he stood out. One modern scholar writes that Lydus was "the chief representative of antiquarian studies from the fourth to the sixth century AD".[29] Lydus achieved a rapid promotion in the Praetorian Prefecture, was placed in the "imperial school" at Constantinople, and had a name for his excellent command of Latin.[30] Lydus was a lover of Rome, agreeing with the oracle which predicted that Fortune would desert the Romans when they deserted their ancestral language.[31]

Although he helped to make the new world of Byzantium, a reader of Lydus always feels that he is wistfully casting his sights back in time.[32] A Christian, he is nonetheless sympathetic to paganism,[33] and is considered to be "the last astrologer of the old

[27] Bandy (1983) pp. ix and xxiv.

[28] Maas (1992) p. 2 adds that "… at stake in Justinianic Constantinople were the last hopes of genuine intellectual pluralism". This adds a special poignancy to Lydus' work.

[29] Bandy (1983) p. ix.

[30] Bandy (1983) pp. ix-xvi.

[31] Bandy (1983) pp. xix.

[32] "We find a sense of a vanishing order in other authors of the day, but none speaks as clearly about decline as Lydus". Maas (1992) p. 7.

[33] It was later noted that Lydus was silent on Christianity, and thus began a debate on whether Lydus was Christian or not: Maas (1992) p. 4.

world".[34] In some ways, Lydus shows that there was still a certain plurality of views under Justinian.[35]

Lydus had read Philo of Byblos, and had access to more than appears in Eusebius, for Lydus says that according to Herennius (our Philo) the word "Barro" (the Greek transliteration of "Varro") means "Jew" in Phoenician.[36] Lydus claimed to be a lover of etymologies, and he could certainly lay claim to extensive knowledge, and to being concerned to grasp the principles of the liberal arts, speaking, for example, of trying to follow through the "law of history" (τοῦ νόμου τῆς ἱστορίας).[37] He seems to have understood this law as being the necessity of starting with the ancient cause of a phenomenon and then tracing it through its developments and permutations. He certainly cannot be faulted in his application of his own principles, for his study of the Roman magistracies commences with Aeneas.[38]

History was important in Rome, and more so in Justinian's time, for by then, the legend of Rome was such that "antiquity provided models of correct behaviour and conveyed moral and political legitimacy …".[39] A historian had the opportunity to present the past, and by doing so, to "control its legitimating force".[40]

A passage in Lydus makes connections among the Phoenicians, the concepts of light and mind, and the deity *Iao*. In *De mensibus* (Concerning the Months), Lydus treats of the pagan calendar, and all the incidents, especially the festive, which accompanied it. He is never too busy to digress into obscure byways of heathen learning. In this passage, Lydus has been discussing the identity of the god revered by the Hebrews, and after enjoying himself with tangents, writes:

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[34] Bandy (1983) pp. xxix.

[35] Maas (1992) p. 3.

[36] *On Powers* 1.12 and 1.23, in Bandy (1983) pp. 24-25 and 38-39.

[37] *On Powers* 1.23 and 3.1.

[38] *On Powers* 1.1. This is not to say that he was a "pure" historian: Maas (1992) p. 5 sees Lydus as an "antiquarian"—"interested in the past without being interested in history *per se* …".

[39] Maas (1992) p. 1. Maas also writes: "Romans were never indifferent to history. They trusted in precedent, not progress, and self-consciously defined themselves against their past".

[40] Maas (1992) p. 2.

> Ὁ δὲ Ῥωμαῖος Βάρρων περὶ αὐτοῦ διαλαβών φησι παρὰ Χαλδαίοις ἐν τοῖς μυστικοῖς αὐτὸν λέγεσθαι Ἰάω ἀντὶ τοῦ φῶς νοητὸν τῇ Φοινίκων γλώσσῃ, ὥς φησιν Ἑρέννιος. Καὶ Σαβαώθ δὲ πολλαχοῦ λέγεται, οἷον ὁ ὑπὲρ τοὺς ἑπτὰ πόλους, τουτέστιν ὁ δημιουργός.

> The Roman Varro, distinguishing him, says that amongst the Chaldeans in the mysteries he is called "Iao" (in place of) the noetic light in the Phoenician tongue, which Herennios (also) says. And "Sabaoth" in many places it is said, is the only one who is (or, such a one as is) above the seven spheres, that is, the Demiurge.[41]

The first thing to note is that here, the "noetic light" is not the light of the sun. This is, rather, the light of the noetic world, the world behind the physical. This follows from its consistent use in Neoplatonism, as we saw in chapters 2 and 3 when dealing with *nous* in Julian. The reader will recall that Julian spoke of this connection between sunbeams and *nous* as a *Phoenician* idea. Here, one could reasonably expect that the source of Lydus' φῶς must be the noetic sun, but this is not stated in Lydus.

But Lydus uses the word φῶς and he gives two authorities, Varro and Philo. There is no reason to construe this passage narrowly or to deny its meaning. In my view, we can accept this as late but reliable evidence for a Phoenician connection between light and intelligence.

Secondly, as in Origen and Irenaeus, Sabaoth is an *archon*, while here, Iao is, on the contrary, benign to humans, being a deity of intelligent (or intelligible) light. In other pagan quarters, Iao was identified with Sabaoth. This identification laid the basis for a further identification, with Dionysos, through the equation Sabaoth = Sabazios.[42] This reminds us again of the great diversity within the ancient world, and the danger of assuming that a divine figure with a distinct, and even a distinctive name, whether beneficent or maleficent, necessarily maintained the same attributes. Among magicians, certain deities such as Abraxas seem to have been developed who did not enter the theologies which have come down to us. Other deities who are known to us from other contexts, such as Iao, acquire new characteristics. For example, in

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[41] Lydus *De mensibus* Book IV, the Month of March, 111, 4.53.
[42] Levin (1989) p. 1635.

magical texts, Iao, Adonai, and Abraxas were "frequently invoked together as designations of the supreme solar god".[43]

Third, Lewy is of the view that Philo of Byblos[44] bases this statement upon the equation between Iao and Aion, which is found in certain of the Greek magical papyri. Lewy also refers to Julian's Solar Pericope as evidencing the same belief,[45] and although he does not relate the two doctrines, he later deals with "the Call" to theurgy and the subsequent psychic transformation in the theology of the *Chaldaean Oracles* and Iamblichos. According to Iamblichos, there is an "irradiation" of the sun's light which is the "call" of the godhead.[46] This light, spread wherever the sun shines, links the universe and "calls" humans to "share", as it were, in the "perfection" of the one. It is the "calling power" to which Julian refers in his *Hymn to the Mother of the Gods*.[47]

To return to the crux of this third point, Lewy observes that when Julian's Solar Pericope and this passage of Lydus are read together and in the light of magical papyri, it is apparent that there is a relationship between Iao and Aion. However, in my view, to suggest, as Lewy does, that Philo has based his ideas upon Greek magical papyri, is arbitrary. A reading of Philo does not support the idea that he had any knowledge of the Greek magical papyri at all. Further, Lewy does not consider from where else the equation might have come: once more, scholars tend to find parallels and sources only where they look for them.

To include the "calling power" in all this, overextends the connections. Further, I would prefer to base the connection between Iao and Aion (or more accurately, among Iao, time, and eternity) not upon this passage and magical papyri, but upon Lydus' next quote from Philo.

Fourth, although the word in question is a Phoenician one, the people who conduct these mysteries on which Iao is mentioned, are Chaldeans. Like the Edessa Pericope, this is another fragment which tantalizes with the suggestion that the ancient

[43] Martinez (1991) p. 78.

[44] Lydus refers to him as "Herennios", see Lewy (1978) p. 409, n. 32.

[45] Lewy (1978) p. 409 n. 32.

[46] Lewy (1978) p. 469.

[47] In support of this conclusion, Lewy refers to *Hymn to the Mother of the Gods* at 175B and 179C. While the first reference is sound, the second is not.

world of the East may have had an "international" dimension, at least among the learned. Attridge and Oden offer a translation which does not differ from mine. They read: "… among the Chaldeans in the mysteries he is called Iao, which stands for 'intelligible light' in the Phoenician language …".[48] It is interesting that Lydus quotes what the Chaldeans call the Hebrew god, when it is the same as the name the Hebrews use in Greek (see below). He does so because the fresh information is that Iao stands for noetic light in Phoenician. If the Chaldeans are not associated with the Phoenicians and their notions of noetic light, I am at a loss to conjecture why they should be mentioned at all.

As we saw, Porphyry stated that Pythagoras was instructed by Chaldeans in Tyre. But the mystery of the Chaldeans has only begun. I shall not conduct a full enquiry into it here, but I will draw attention to some recent research by Kingsley. He refers to some interesting material about "Chaldeans" in Greek literature, especially with reference to the visit of a Chaldean to Plato on his death bed. The Greeks often confused Persians with Chaldeans, but even so, one cannot simply read "Persian" for "Chaldean", for there is good evidence that philosophers in the entourage of Plato and Aristotle were acquainted with certain *Babylonian* ideas. For example, Kingsley has identified in the *Epinomis* (whether it was written by Plato, or Philip of Opus, or someone in the Platonic tradition) a "virtually exact translation into Greek" of a line from the Babylonian *Enūma Anu Enlil*.[49] In the myth of *Er* in his *Republic*, Plato associates each planet with just the color with which it was associated in Babylon. There are more examples, but I shall not cite them all. They amply bear out Kingsley's conclusion several pages later:

> … we find people in the immediate entourage of Plato and Aristotle giving virtually word-for-word translations into Greek from the *Enūma Anu Enlil* or related Babylonian literature.[50]

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[48] Attridge and Oden Jr (1981) p. 71.

[49] Kingsley (1995a) pp. 199-203.

[50] Kingsley (1995a) pp. 206-207. Not one of these borrowings was acknowledged by the Greek writers, but we are not sure that these were direct borrowings. They may have been verbatim purloinings from an intermediate source which itself copied them verbatim.

To return to Lydus, the fifth point to note is that the text seems to refer to a deity named Iao, who was also a solar deity in Phoenicia. This follows from the terms of the passage itself, in its context which is a discussion of the Hebrew god. This conclusion is assisted by the immediately following discussion of Sabaoth as demiurge. The name "Iao" is known to have been used as a Greek transliteration of "Yahweh", the Tetragrammaton, in place of the more familiar Κύριος. A fragmentary Septuagint papyrus text of Leviticus found at Qumran (4Q LXX Lev^{b}) has the name Iao in two surviving places. There are traces of it in Leviticus 3:12 (the offering of a goat to Yahweh), but the reading is "ineluctable" at Leviticus 4:27 (sins of the "people of the land").[51] As only ten segments of chapters 2 to 5 of Leviticus are legible from the surviving fragments, Skehan concludes that it could well be that the name "Iao" was employed from the first days of the Septuagint tradition.[52]

"Iao" was not the only form that the divine name took in Greek letters: Iaoue, Iaouai, and Iae are also attested.[53] There is an opinion that the form "Iao" is an equivalent of the Hebrew pronunciation "Yaho".[54] The problem is that we cannot be certain how the writers of these materials—Greek and Hebrew alike—pronounced them, even if we can tell when they are trying to distinguish different pronunciations. However Iao may have been pronounced, and whether it was strictly equivalent to Yaho, it was still a prominent way of rendering the name of Yahweh in the late antique world.

It seems to be a fair conclusion that Iao was one of the sun gods—though certainly not the only sun god in Phoenicia. If there were indeed more sun gods than Šamaš, then I suggest that the Iao who was worshipped in Phoenicia was a sun god of the philosophers and theologians, associated with the doctrines amongst which we number the idea of the "noetic light". It is not impossible that Iao was identified with Šamaš.

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[51] Skehan (1957) p. 157.

[52] Skehan (1957) p. 157.

[53] Philo of Byblos also has the form "Ieuo": (1981) pp. 21 and 24 n. 22.

[54] Thompson (1992) vol. 6, 1011-1012. Thompson provides no reference for his statement that "Iao" was the equivalent of "Yaho".

The question arises as to what Lydus may have meant when he referred to "Phoenicians". There are too few references in his extant works to conduct a satisfactory enquiry. A passage in Book Four dealing with Astarte and Adonis would leave little doubt that Lydus is referring to the Phoenicians of Lebanon, for in this connection he speaks of the two rivers which fall from Lebanon to the sea.[55]

Further, there is an interesting passage in *De mensibus*, where Lydus speaks of various opinions about Zeus. Lydus mentions that some say that Zeus' nurse, Amaltheia, was *time*, which brought about his increase. After noting the opinions of Krates and Poseidonios, he states that according to Chrysippos, he takes his name from the fact that through him all things exist (the pun is on the oblique forms of Zeus' name, which sound like the word διά for "through"). Others take his name from δεῖν, "necessity", and others from ζωή, the word for "life", which commences with a "z". Others have a doctrine of three Zeuses (sic), and then he states:

> οἱ δὲ Φοίνικες βασιλέα φάσιν αὐτὸν γενέσθαι δικαιοτατόν, ὥστε τὴν περὶ αὐτοῦ δόξαν κρείττονα γενέσθαι τοῦ χρόνου …[56]
>
> The Phoenicians say him to be the most just king, so that the opinion about him is that he is mightier than time …

This provides reason to conclude that Lydus had access to sources about the Phoenicians, according to which they had a rather sophisticated tradition, and that these ideas were "corporate". That is, the opinion is attributed to "the Phoenicians", not to an individual Phoenician. It is also suggestive that this particular opinion could not be found among the Greeks, for Lydus has a partiality for Greek philosophers. Attridge and Oden do not list this passage among the fragments of Philo. One can understand why: it does not name him. However, on the basis of the following, I am inclined to believe that the source was Philo. Later in Book Four, Lydus states:

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[55] Lydus *De mensibus* Book 4, April, pp. 118-119.

[56] Lydus *De mensibus* Book 4, April, p. 123, 71. See also p. 122, where paragraph 71 commences.

<οἱ δὲ Φοίν>ικες κατὰ τὸν τῆς ὁμωνυμίας <τρόπον, εἴτε κατ>ὰ τινα ἀ<λλήγορ>ιαν ἀλλῶς πῶς περὶ Κρόνου ἔχουσιν, ὥς ἐκ τῆς δευτέρας τῶν Φοινικίκων τοῦ Ἑρεννίου Φιλῶνος <ἐστι λαβεῖ>ν. καὶ βασιλεῦσαι δὲ αὐτὸν ἡ ἱστορία πα<ρα>δίδωσιν <ὡς ἔμπρο>σθεν ἀφηγήσαμεν …[57]

The Phoenicians according to that way of sameness of names, or according to some allegory (or something else), (tell) about Kronos, as is found in the second book of the *Phoenikika* of Herennius Philo; and the story they hand down is that he was king, as I have set out above …

The earlier passage about Zeus and his justice does not mention Kronos, or his rule, but it does mention χρόνος, "time". If Lydus had some source other than Philo for his Phoenician doctrines on Kronos and time, whether taken alone or separately, he does not mention it. The similarity of names of which he speaks may well be the famous Greek pun on Κρόνος, "Kronos", and χρόνος, "time", but equally, I suggest below that there may well be a pun available in Phoenician, on the name of the deity Baʿal Ḥammōn. First, some background. The myth of Kronos, as is accepted now, comes from a North Syrian background. "Kronos" had some place in the Phoenician pantheon, and was guardian of one of the quarters of Arwad. Under the name of Baʿal Ḥammon (which was possibly an epithet of Dagon), he had a cult in Syria, Jordan, Palmyra, and Lebanon, especially in Baalbek. Interestingly, there is evidence from classical writers which identifies Kronos with both El and Dagon.[58] Baʿal Ḥammon, for his part, was known, at least in Punic times, to have been identified with Zeus, too.[59] Once again, we encounter the fluidity of the *interpretatio graeca*.[60]

As was seen above, Apollo could be identified with the Phoenician deity Ešmun. This identification was made when the emphasis was on Apollo's role as healer. However, if one approached this equation from the other side, as it were, by asking

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[57] Lydus (1898) p. 170, Book 4, O.

[58] *DCPP* pp. 250-251.

[59] Barré (1983) p. 57.

[60] I am well aware of the lengthy discussion of this deity's name in Xella (1991). However, I am only speaking about a possible wordplay, not the actual etymology of the name.

which Greek deity was to be identified with the Phoenician healing god Ešmun, then the likeliest identification was with Asklepios. In that instance, Apollo, who was Asklepios' father, was free to be considered as the sun. This, together with the example of Baʿal Ḥammon, demonstrates that in the *interpretatio graeca*, a Phoenician deity could have more than one equivalent in the Greek pantheon. Because the deities within a pantheon had family relationships, these identifications could be quite complex. More than one member of the family might need to be used to articulate the fullness of the deity being "translated". For example, in Greece, kingship had passed from Kronos to his son Zeus. So, to express the "kingship of the gods", a Phoenician might invoke "El", "Baʿal Ḥammon", or "Dagon", depending upon the precise nature of the "kingship" in that context. For example, whether it was one which had been assumed by the royal son, whether it belonged to the elder deity, or what else.

In Phoenician, the name Baʿal Ḥammon is spelt with "Ḥ", the eighth letter of the Phoenician alphabet. The name is spelt in Phoenician with the three letters "Ḥ", "m", and "n".[61] I suggest that this name is sufficiently similar to the root *ḥym*, with a basic meaning of "life, living", to ground the sort of pun which the Greeks made on Kronos' name. Both Tomback and Krahmalkov list as a meaning of *ḥym* "lifetime".[62] Further, Phoenician knew an afformative *nun*. The example Krahmalkov furnishes shows an afformative *nun* attached to the noun for a god, thus Krahmalkov cites *allon-*.[63]

Liddell, Scott, and Jones' *Greek-English Lexicon* has, for χρόνος, first the meaning of "time" and various connotations organized around this concept. However, its second basic sense of χρόνος is "lifetime". Thus, the senses of the Phoenician and the Greek words dovetail nicely. I wish to stress that I am not venturing into etymology here. I am only pointing out that a certain *pun* which was possible in Greek may also have been possible in Phoenician, and thus that there may be some relation between the two. If my conjecture is correct, then it suggests that the Greeks

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[61] Krahmalkov (2000) p. 187, under *ḥmn* I.

[62] Krahmalkov (2000) p. 183, under ḥym III; Tomback (1978) pp. 102-103, under ḥym II.

[63] Krahmalkov (2001) p. 128.

assimilated this concept of "Kronos" being an allegory of χρόνος at the same time as they learned the myth of the devouring god. It may even be that the name "Kronos" was chosen for the Greek deity in order to render the pun. This is, as stated, speculative, but there is no historical data concerning the transmission of the myth to Greece which would stand as an impediment to it.

Even if I am not correct in my theory of the two Phoenician times (eternity and ephemeral time) measured by the sun, there is an equivalence here between the Greek pun and the possible Phoenician one. In one case, the name of the devouring god (Kronos) is similar to that which does the devouring (time), and in the other, the resemblance is to that which is devoured, the lifetime. One might add that, in a sense, the parallel is closer, for our time is consumed. However, if my thesis is correct in this respect, then the lifetime beneath the sun does stand for the time which passes away, and so the similarity in names is even more apparent.

I now come to a two-part hypothesis which is admittedly speculative, but I think that it is necessary for a scholar to attempt to explain the texts cited, even if the explanation is incapable of rigorous demonstration. Part one of the hypothesis proposes that the Phoenician notion of the justice of Zeus is related to the Phoenician juxtaposition of the eternal sun with the time of life beneath the sun. If Zeus brings a justice more powerful than time, then it must also be beyond time. I tentatively suggest that Zeus was related to or identified with the eternal sun of Phoenician theology.

In the second part of this hypothesis, Zeus is to be identified as Iao in the *interpretatio graeca*. I have never seen this passage about Zeus being a deity mightier than time cited when Lydus' statement about the "noetic light" is mentioned. For all that, I contend that the two are related. Iao is known in Judaism and Christianity as the highest and indeed, the only, deity. The equivalence is clear. Further, Zeus was identified by the Greeks with the Egyptian Amon (also in Hellenic times, the chief deity) and, considered as Zeus Ammon, Zeus was a solar and oracular god.

COULD IAO BE A PHOENICIAN SOLAR DEITY?

One might think it unlikely that there really was a Phoenician deity with the same name as the Hebrew deity Yahweh. However, the

evidence seems to point that way, although, for example, *DCPP* has no entry for Iao or Yahweh. First, there is the fragment from Porphyry, preserved in Eusebius, where he writes that Sanchuniathon of Beirut is the most truthful (ἀληθέστατα) reporter about the Jews. It earns this accolade because:

> τοῖς τόποις καὶ τοῖς ὀνόμασιν αὐτῶν τὰ συμφωνότατα
>
> It is the most in accordance with their places and names.[64]

Porphyry says that its accuracy is attributable to the fact that Sanchuniathon used the account of Hierombaal, the priest of Ieuo, who wrote a history and dedicated it to Abibaal. Porphyry goes on to say that Abibaal and the examiners of veracity accepted it as correct.

We must wonder why a priest of Ieuo (that is, Yahweh, as the priest's text concerns the Jews), would be dedicating such a text to the king of Beirut.[65] Was he a priest in Beirut, or in Israel? Attridge and Oden note: "It may seem strange that a priest of Beirut should be linked to Yahweh. Since similar divine names are widely attested [and here they cite among other attestations, that of Lydus concerning the Phoenicians and Iao] there is no need to see here authentic data about an ancient Phoenician cult".[66]

Baumgarten writes: "In view of the close geographical, linguistic, and ethnic connections of Jews and Phoenicians, works on the Jews might be approved by Phoenician scholars or Jews might be discussed by an author like Sanchuniathon".[67] After discussing other views, he concluded that the text as we have it, leads one to conclude that Sanchuniathon did not only mention the Jews in passing.[68] With regard to these "connections", one might note that it is not easy to distinguish the architecture of Phoenicians and Israelites in the tenth and ninth centuries BCE.[69]

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[64] Eusebius, *Praeparatio Evangelica*, 1.9.21

[65] That Ieuo is a name for Yahweh is also argued by Attridge and Oden (1981) p. 24, n. 22. There are views to the contrary, but they speculate that here, by Ieuo is meant Yam and not Yahweh at all, an idea not founded on relevant evidence.

[66] Attridge and Oden (1981) p. 24, n. 22.

[67] Baumgarten (1977) p. 59.

[68] Baumgarten (1977) p. 59 n. 59.

[69] de Geus (1991) pp. 13-14.

The idea has been mooted that Beirut was only a village before Roman times. However, it is known that Beirut was settled even in Neolithic times, and had contact with the larger world. For example, a sphinx with the name of the Middle Kingdom Pharaoh Amenemhet III has been found there.[70]

Bonnet and Xella observe that Hierombaal dedicated his work to his king, Abibaal.[71] We are not told anything of this priest's history, or how he acquired his knowledge of Israel, but the mere facts are suggestive of a situation where a priest of Beirut could travel through Israel. One even wonders whether Hierombaal had a special interest in Israel as being a center of Yahweh worship.

It is difficult to identify this Abibaal. None of the kings of this name known to us ruled Beirut.[72] Further, Porphyry asserts that Hierombaal and Abibaal were "almost approaching Moses" in point of time.[73] We do not know when Porphyry dated Moses, or when he meant to signify that Abibaal lived. The phrase "almost approaching" is vague, and perhaps deliberately so. Porphyry also states that Abibaal lived before the Trojan wars. As I have conjectured above, I tend to think that this means "before we have any data about Greek history". If Porphyry's assertion means anything at all, then Hierombaal's work must have predated Hekataios and Herodotos.

I disagree with Attridge and Oden's declaration that "there is no need to see here authentic data about an ancient Phoenician cult". The issue is not "need", but logic and evidence. Particularly with Lydus' evidence, one would conclude that we have a priest of that god in Beirut, who is an expert in matters to do with Israel. This is made more credible by the evidence concerning the origin of Yahweh.

The deity known to us today as Yahweh is attested in certain Egyptian names lists. These lists are read as if they associate Yahweh with the land of Seir (Edom), but the topic is controversial. The question is: does the list refer to "Seir" or to "Syria"? Astour, in an authoritative review of the issue, concludes that this list discloses "a Syrian place name in Egyptian records of the New Kingdom, onomastically identical with the divine name

[70] Lauffray (1977) p. 140.
[71] *DCPP* p. 387.
[72] *DCPP* pp. 3-4.
[73] Eusebius *Praeparatio Evangelica* 1.9.21.

Yahweh".[74] However, the more common view is that the lists are evidence that the name Yahweh was circulating as a divine name in Edom and Midianite territory about 1400 BCE.[75] A consideration of that material, and the Midianite connection, is not relevant to my purpose. Suffice to say, that even if Astour is correct, the Edomite connection with Yahweh is solidly established by the Biblical material, which on any fair reading states that Yahweh came from Edom or areas of Edom (Paran and Seir).[76]

While there may be controversy about when Yahweh first appears in Syria, it is known that by the eighth century BCE, two Aramaean princes are attested with "Yau" elements in their names.[77]

There is extant a Phoenician language text, dedicated to one *mtn ʿštrt*, "Mattan Ashtart", the son of *ʿzryhw*, "ʿAzaryahu", son of *mtn*, son of *šlm*, the chief of the scribes. This text hails from Kition in Cyprus. Heltzer notes that "Mattan ʿAshtart" is a "purely Phoenician theophoric name".[78] ʿAzaryahu is a "purely Hebrew Yahwistic name". "Mtn"[79] can be either Phoenician or Hebrew, and means "gift". Šlm can be Hebrew, Phoenician, Punic, or Aramaic. The position of chief scribe was also known in Phoenicia.[80]

This inscription was found near another from the same site which was dedicated "to Šlm, son of ʾspyhw" (i.e., Asapyahu).[81] A third stele may be Hebrew, for although one of the names can be Phoenician, the other is Haggai, and that is said by Heltzer not to be attested in Phoenician.[82] Krahmalkov lists the names ʿzaryahu,[83] Mattan-ʿshtart,[84] ʾsapyahu,[85] and Šlm.[86] It is known that there was a

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[74] See Thompson (1992) p. 1012; Astour (1976), p. 971.

[75] Thompson (1992) p. 1012.

[76] Astour (1976) p. 971. I have not cited the biblical evidence as the fact that Yahweh was not exclusively an Israelite deity is established. The puzzle is only whether he originated in Edom or Syria.

[77] Thompson (1992) p. 1012.

[78] Heltzer (1991) p. 504.

[79] I will not attempt to vocalize these names.

[80] Heltzer (1991) pp. 503-505.

[81] Heltzer (1991) p. 503. The name Asapyahu means "Yahweh gather!"

[82] Heltzer (1991) pp. 508-509.

[83] Krahmalkov (2000) pp. 364-365.

[84] Krahmalkov (2000) p. 322.

tenth century BCE ruler of Tyre named "Mtnʿštrt".[87] Krahmalkov and Benz also list as a Phoenician name, ḥgy.[88] Heltzer does not refer to the entry in Benz, which had been published at the time he delivered his paper.

Is it likely that in one city we would find two Phoenician families with Yahweh names, where normally we see none at all? These inscriptions are Phoenician in language. It may be that if there was a Phoenician cult of Yahweh, the name was popularly used here as a theophoric element in naming. The difficult fact, the one which makes an interpretation of this evidence difficult, is the name Mtnʿštrt. Heltzer does not attempt to explain why a man with a pure Hebrew name would have a son with the name of the goddess whose worship is described in the Hebrew Bible as calling down the wrath of Yahweh.

In my view, the simplest explanation is that in at least the case of Azaryahu, we have a Yahweh name given to a Phoenician polytheist, and thus further evidence for a Phoenician Yahweh cult. One might speculate about conversions and apostasy, but although the Hebrew Bible attests that people would abandon Yahwism for Canaanite religion, I have not seen any evidence for movement in the opposite direction.

The possibility of an ancient Phoenician cult of Yahweh sheds new light on the employment of Tyrian artists and craftsmen in building the temple of Yahweh in Jerusalem for Solomon. If there was a cult of Yahweh in Tyre, as there was at Beirut, this would provide an unexpected context for Hiram's asseveration in 1 Kings 5:7 (= 1 Kings 5:21 Hebrew), *brwk Yhwh* ("blessed be Yahweh").[89] It also suggests that while Solomon did appreciate the timber-working ability of the "Sidonians", there was no religious impediment to their working on a temple of Yahweh.

While the Tyrians are also said to have performed secular work for Solomon, the fact that they were called in to build Yahweh's temple may be significant. Stern suggests that relations

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[85] Krahmalkov (2000) p. 66. Krahmalkov notes that the language of the name may be Hebrew.

[86] Krahmalkov (2000) p. 464.

[87] See *DCPP* p. 290 under "Methodnastartos".

[88] Krahmalkov (2000) p. 176 and Benz (1972) p. 109.

[89] I am not suggesting that this exclamation was historical. But it may well be that the writer(s) believed it to be, and this itself is a historical fact.

between the Phoenicians and the United Monarchy were so close that the Israelites and Phoenicians shared a temple to Baʿal on the summit of Carmel.[90] While Stern is basing his ideas upon biblical texts which I find doubtful for several reasons which are not relevant here, Stern's thesis cannot be dismissed, and if my theory about a Phoenician cult of Yahweh is correct, takes on a new dimension.

If my research and interpretation are sound, then we have in Porphyry, Philo, and Lydus references to the deity known to the Phoenicians as "Iao" if not actually "Yahweh".[91] The evidence is ample to make out a persuasive case. I further contend that the relationship between the passages in Julian and Lydus on the noetic light is sufficiently close to warrant the inference that these two concepts hail from the one system of thought, and therefore are coeval. They will therefore date from a time no later than that of Philo of Byblos and, as I read Lydus, Varro. Further, the fact that they are attributed to "the Phoenicians" *simpliciter* suggests that they were the property of a class, perhaps of priests, and not of one isolated scribe.

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[90] Stern (1991) p. 93.

[91] Although Lydus is dependent upon Philo, he also cites Varro, and thus can be considered a third source. To recapitulate, Porphyry is quoted not by Philo, but directly by Eusebius.

CONCLUSION

In the Solar Pericope, Julian reports that unnamed Phoenician theologians teach that "pure mind" is sourced in the "immaculate" rays of the sun. The passage is short and bears repeating:

> For the opinion of the Phoenicians—(who are) wise and possessed of knowledge in respect of divine matters—stated that the sunlight (which is) sent forth everywhere is the immaculate action of pure mind itself.

The Aphrodite Pericope, which follows the Solar Pericope in Julian's *Hymn to King Helios*, makes it clear that the sun is seen as by the Phoenicians as a deity, hence Julian states:

> A few things (remain) yet, concerning Aphrodite, of whom the erudite among the Phoenicians speak as one, saying that she takes part with the god (sc. Helios) in the creation. And I believe them.

The link between the sun and the creation is not unique to the Aphrodite Pericope. For example, we saw that it is found in both of the Phoenician cosmogonies preserved by Damaskios:

> The Sidonians … suggest Time before all, and Desire and Mist. When Desire and Mist had mixed as two principles, Aer came into being, and Aura. Aer is unmixed intellect, they intimate. Aura is set moving by him perceptible to the mind (i.e., Aer) (and is) the prepared mould of the living. Then from both these Oton (*possibly* Otos) was born, according to the mind; I think he is the intelligible.

> … (In) the Phoenician mythology according to Mochos(.) Aither was the first, and Aer; these are the two same principles from which was begotten Oulomos the (first) deity that intellect can perceive, and he, I think, is unmixed mind. … Otherwise, after the two principles (Aither and Aer) in the heights (was) Wind, the unified (*lit.* the one), and in the middle were two winds, Wet-Wind and South-Wind. For somehow they make these prior to Oulomos. This Oulomos himself is the mind that may be intelligible. The opener Khousros is the first order among whatever is intelligible.

In these cosmogonies, the clearest point of departure for us is Oulamos. This is almost certainly the sun, for, so far as we can tell, "the eternal", *ʿlm*, was an exclusive epithet of the sun in ancient Phoenicia. The association between Oulamos on the one hand, and the mind and perceptibility on the other, while not entirely clear in Damaskios' account, nonetheless supports the identification with the sun, and confirms the accuracy of Julian's Solar Pericope. In trying to identify Oton, we saw that it appears significant that, like Oulamos, he is born of Aer. These deities are similarly described. Oton is referred to as τὸν νοητόν and of Oulamos it is said that he is ὁ νοητὸς θεός and ὁ νοητός *simpliciter*. If indeed these deities are one and the same, then it may well be that "Oton" is Utu, the Sumerian sun god. If so, this name "Oton" would supplement my identification of Oulamos with the sun. That is, the proposed identification does not rest upon my suggested etymology of "Oton".

Therefore, these passages together make a rather strong case for a Phoenician theology in which the sun is associated with the creation, and particularly with the intellectual aspects of the universe, and explicitly with *nous* or "mind". Just as the light of the sun allows us to see, so, too, by its nature, it seems to make intellect possible and to be the first intelligible principle in the cosmos. Given the brightness of the sun, this may seem unremarkable. However, the point is significant, because the Phoenicians did not rest there, but went on to fashion a system of religious thought in which the rays of the sun are described as "immaculate" and mind is spoken of as "pure".

That is, in this related group of Phoenician ideas, an element which goes beyond rational analysis enters: an element which one could call "devotional", or even "spiritual". Clearly, there is a certain amount of analysis here. The Phoenicians were evidently also capable of, and engaged in, sustained contemplation on the nature of the universe and how it came to be. It is because this system corresponded to Julian's nature—both intellectual and pious at once—that it appealed to him and he made use of it.

It is my view, as much as it was Julian's, that ancient Phoenician religion embraced both a depth of thought and an elevation of feeling such that one may say it possessed a spiritual aspect. "Spirit" is defined in the *Shorter Oxford Dictionary*, as, *inter alia* "the animating or vital principle in man (and animals); that which

gives life to the physical organism, in contrast to its purely material elements; the breath of life". In a more overtly religious sense it is defined as "the soul of a person, as commended to God …". The word "spiritual" also has a number of meanings and nuances. The first and perhaps the central meaning is defined as: "of, pertaining to, affecting or concerning, the spirit or higher moral qualities, esp. as regarded in a religious aspect". Another sense of this word is "characterized by a high degree of thought or feeling".[1]

In discussing Phoenician religion, we are not limited, then, to describing only the ritual worship of certain deities, the making of vows, and the engraving of inscriptions. I am not devaluing these essential pursuits: scholars must still continue to research these matters, and to ask which deities in question abide under the various names of the Phoenician pantheon. But we can add another dimension, as it were. The Solar Pericope, read together with the other materials, shows us a body of thought in which the nature and origin of intellect has become a matter of reflection, and the results of this thought are expressed partly in mythical, partly in philosophical terms. Damaskios refers to the *mythology* of Mochos, while citing it in a philosophical work, thus nicely demonstrating how Phoenician thought combined aspects of both.

There is only a line in the sand between mythology, religion, spirituality, mysticism, theology, and philosophy. Yet this mild indentation can appear to be an unbridgeable gulf. To the Phoenicians, as to perhaps most ancient peoples, it may not have been so. Therefore, I have collected and compared all types of evidence, not limiting myself only to what we would think of as philosophical.

Although Julian used a philosophical vocabulary, and spoke of these ideas in terms of Greek religion, he yet managed to convey that at the center of the Phoenician universe is a god who sends pure beams into the atmosphere and thereby fills the world with undefiled mind. In this activity he is aided by a puissant goddess who was revered throughout the Mediterranean. Their beneficence is supra-personal in that it sustains the entire cosmos and created it as a whole. We know from other evidence, that this hearth of light and warmth regulates the seasons and thus causes and maintains

[1] Third edition, Oxford, revised 1973

the health of humans and animals alike (as Pausanias' Sidonian said).

In considering the sun in Phoenicia, we found that there are other dimensions of religious and spiritual experience here, too. Individual Phoenicians might hope that after they had passed from this world of ceaseless change, they would find eternal rest in the kingdom of the healing or restful gods, the Rephaim, and with the eternal sun. From the distant corners of the Phoenician Mediterranean we saw two related and complementary prayers. A king in Pyrgi prayed to the Lady Ashtart (the mediatrix of the sun's graces) in the month of the sacrifices of the sun, that his temple might last: "Years as the stars of Il". Many years later, still in the month of sacrifices to the sun, a commoner in Cyprus set up an inscription for the daily lives of his children, his heir, his wife, and his people. Thus there was a deity, Šamaš the sun goddess (or perhaps sun god), to whom people could make their vows and dedicate their prayers, whether their concern was eternity (as in the Pyrgi inscription), or the worldly affairs of their closest (as in the Cyprus inscription). So often in these inscriptions, it is said that the stele was raised because the god "heard my voice".

As we saw, a cluster of ideas could be abstracted from the material. To quote myself, these were:

(I) This passing earthly life is life under the sun (*tḥt šmš*). It is *ephemeral* in the original sense of that word.

This principle was initially drawn from the inscriptions of Tabnit and Ešmunazor II. That this phrase appears in Phoenician inscriptions is quite significant, for it is a striking phrase, and stresses the sun even when referring to life on earth. To put it another way, the fact that such an expression is used is suggestive that the sun has a central and defining role in the conception of earthly life. By itself, this might appear trite. However, the Phoenician solar theology developed beyond this point.

(II) This life may be described as life "among the living" (*bḥym*).

Like the first principle, this was originally abstracted from the Tabnit and Ešmunazor inscriptions. It was supported, however, by the bilingual inscription from Athens, dating to about 400 BCE.

(III) However, another existence is possible. This is not described as *life*. It is described as having a resting place among the Rephaim (*miškb ʾt rpʾm*).

This phrasing was found in the Tabnit and Ešmunazor inscriptions, and the interpretation thereof was supported by the Ahiram inscription. The Ugaritic material is also relevant. Although it is not direct evidence for Phoenicia, nonetheless the existence of similar ideas there shows that it is not fanciful to accept that such ideas existed in Phoenicia, and developed there, over a substantial period of time, in response to local traditions.

(IV) This is existence for eternity (*bʿlm*).

This principle was based upon the terms of the Ahiram and Ešmunazor inscriptions. But there is evidence from the Amarna letters and from Ugarit which would also points to the currency in or near Phoenicia of the idea that the sun is eternal. That idea was also found in the sun's epithet in the Azitawada inscription of Karatepe.

(V) Existence for eternity is not existence *under* the sun. It is conceived as related to, if not ruled over by, the eternal sun. The eternal sun is the sun we know in a specialized role.

This is suggested by the mythology of the sun and the realms of the dead, especially at Ugarit. However, certain of these themes can be found in Egypt and Mesopotamia. Cooper's research attributes the origin of idea of the *mlk ʿlm* in Canaan to a similar concept in Egypt, and finds analogs of this notion in Israel. As we saw, this cannot be taken as establishing the position in Phoenicia, but these concepts may well illustrate the background to the "eternal sun" when it is mentioned in the inscriptions of Azitawada and the son of Šipiṭbaʿal. It is significant that Azitawada prayed that his name would be for eternity, *ykn l ʿlm*, like the sun and the moon. If traditional understandings of the *mrzḥ* are correct, this sodality would provide indirect evidence for an association between the sun (and the sun deity) with the realm of the dead. The importance of the solar cycle and the other chief heavenly bodies (the moon and the planet Venus) is also illustrated in the Byblian scabbard interpreted by Du Mesnil Du Buisson, and in the astrological bowls studied by Hopkins.

(VI) The corollary of this is that the sun is a linguistic symbol of both passing time and eternity.

The sun is not the only such symbol: for we saw that the phoenix bird may have had a similar function. This bird appears to also be associated with the sun. Further, the sun itself could serve as, or be incorporated into, a pictorial symbol. The Sign of Tanit would appear to have been a rather flexible or adaptable symbol, and at times it may portrayed the sun together with other natural features. In figure 3(12), from the Punic world, we saw an engraving of the Sign of Tanit which seems to represent both "life under the sun" and the "eternal sun". If so, then this would support my general reconstruction.

(VII) The living and the dead are related.

The funerary curses against interfering with coffin, sarcophagus and contents amply bear this out. The existence of the *mrzḥ*, probably a sodality for remembrance of the deceased, supports the contention that this was an element of the Phoenician solar theology.

We also saw that this is consistent with the evidence from Mesopotamia. In fact, in the Standard Babylonian Gilgameš epic it may even be that we see the hero undertake a journey from this world beneath the sun to another plane of existence *before* the sun, where there dwell the only immortals known to history.

This thesis has not translated ancient ideas into something more sophisticated by simply wrapping modern concepts and words around them. First, other scholars such as West also read the Karatepe inscription as part of the evidence for some quite advanced ideas on time and creation. Second, we saw that even from Ugarit, and then into Phoenicia, the god of death (Mot) and the sun deity were linked together in an ecology.

Neither can it be said that these concepts only reached a mystical level once the Neoplatonists had reworked the Phoenician mythology. Damaskios has preserved for us some fragments, splinters, of more ancient Phoenician cosmogonies which support the connection between the eternal sun and mind, what is "intelligible". These provide the best single body of evidence for the antiquity of the "Phoenician theology" to be found in Julian.

There is also evidence, brought together in the discussion of Lydus, for more international traffic in ideas throughout the

ancient lands of Western Asia than we would have thought had occurred. The clues are all there, but they need to be collected and carefully analyzed. They need to be examined without preconceptions.

If this is done, a new perspective on the religious world of ancient Phoenicia emerges. We see now a universe which, at least for the theologians, is penetrated everywhere by the presence of the divine. It is a world where the mind itself which humans rely upon is a perpetually flowing gift from a higher level. In this conception, the gods send the rain, they send the winds, and they send and maintain the life giving qualities of the air we breathe.

Even immaterial and abstract qualities come from a higher level; for the opinion of the Phoenicians, who were wise in divine matters, is that the sunlight which is sent forth everywhere is the immaculate action of pure mind itself.

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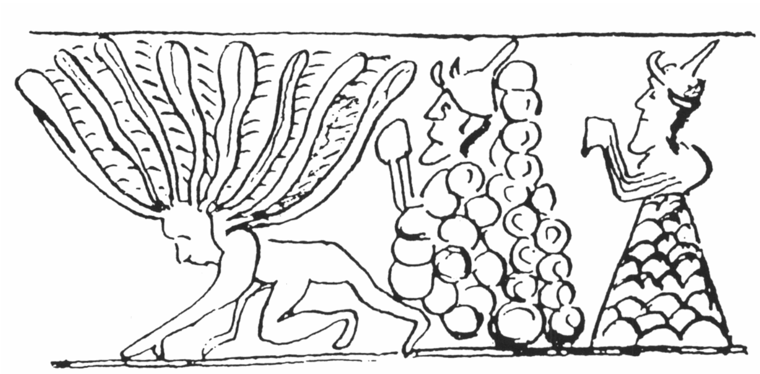
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Detail from a hematite seal with various images,
including a sun goddess.

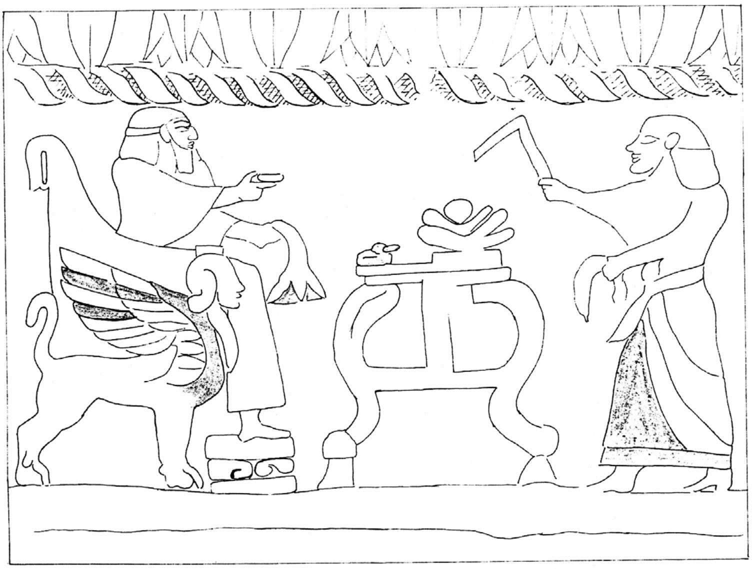
Source:
A. Parrot, "Cylindre Nouvellement Acquis (AO 20138)",
Syria 28 (1951) 180-190, p. 184.
See chapter 7, "The Sun Goddess of Ugarit"



Sketch of the lid of the sarcophagus of Ahiram.

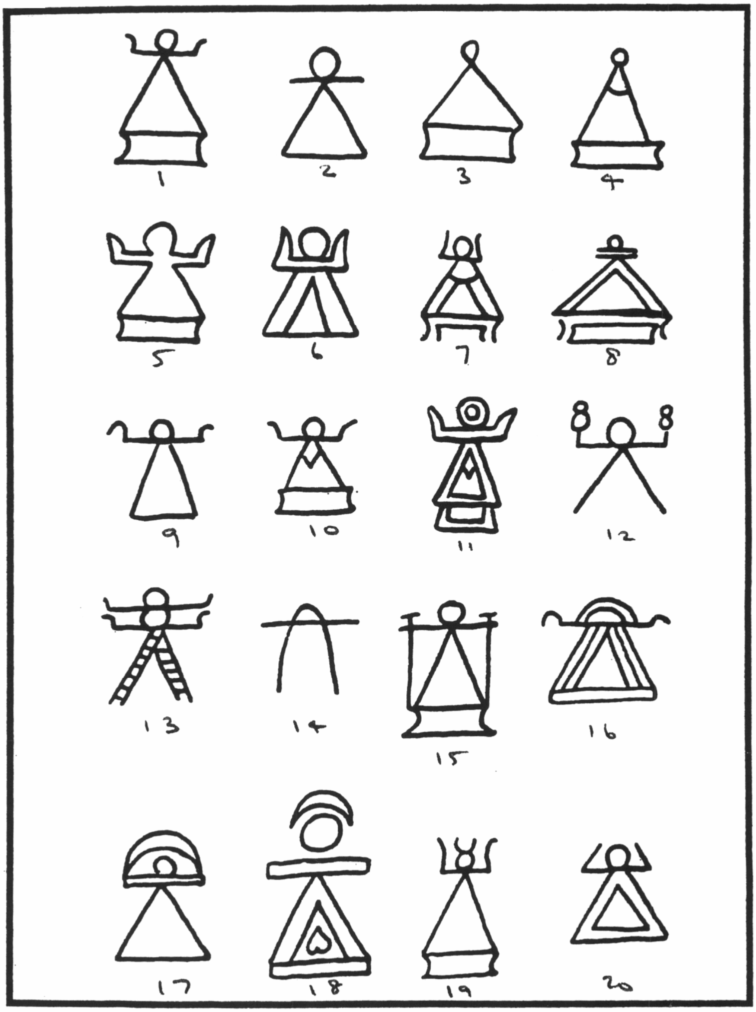
Source:
E. Porada, "Notes on the Sarcophagus of Ahiram",
JANES 5 (1973) 355-372, pp. 370, 371.

See chapter 8, "Phoenician Solar Religion: The Funerary Inscriptions"



Sketch of one side of the sarcophagus of Ahiram.

Source:
E. Porada, “Notes on the Sarcophagus of Ahiram”,
JANES 5 (1973) 355-372, pp. 370, 371.
See chapter 8, “Phoenician Solar Religion: The Funerary Inscriptions”



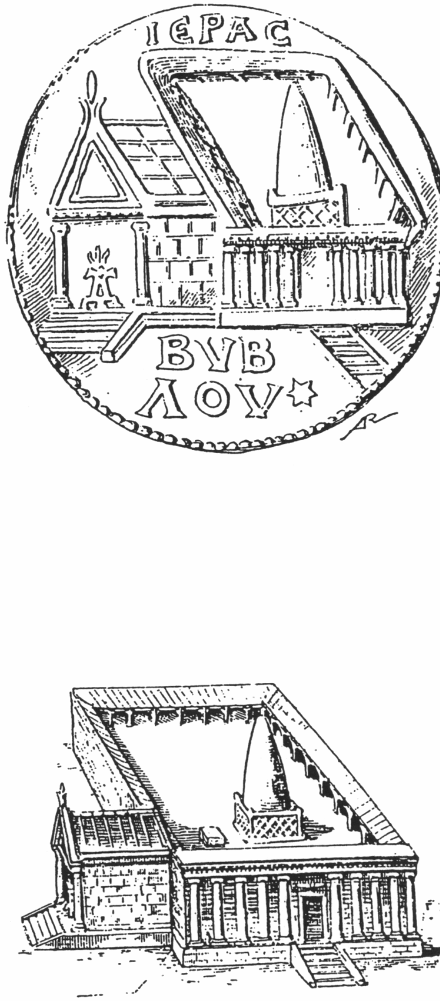
Various depictions of the “Sign of Tanit”, numbered by author.

Source:
DCPP, p. 417.
See chapter 9, “Phoenician Solar Religion: Miscellaneous Evidence”



Sketch of a terracotta plaque from Byblos, which is believed to depict Yḥwmlk before Baʿalat Gubal.

Source:
E. Gubel, *Art Phénicien: La sculpture de tradition phénicienne*, Département des antiquités orientales du Musée du Louvre, Paris, (2001), Figure 12, copying an 1898 sketch by Clermont-Ganneau.
See chapter 9, "Phoenician Solar Religion: Miscellaneous Evidence"



Coin of Macrinus and restoration of the temple of Baʿalat Gubal at Byblos.

Source:
R. Dussaud, "Note additional aux rapports de MM Dunand et Pillet", *Syria* 8 (1927) 113-125, p. 116.

See chapter 9, "Phoenician Solar Religion: Miscellaneous Evidence"



Two coins from Arqa.

Source:
G.F. Hill, *Catalogue of the Greek Coins of Phoenicia*, Trustees of the British Museum, London, (1910) Pl. XIII.
See chapter 9, “Phoenician Solar Religion: Miscellaneous Evidence”